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*Wm Williamson*

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THE  
CHRISTIAN TAUGHT

BY THE  
**Church's Services.**

EDITED BY WALTER FARQUHAR HOOK, D.D.,  
VICAR OF LEEDS.

"Such as are planted in the house of the LORD  
shall flourish in the courts of the house of our GOD."  
—(Psalm xcii. 12.)

"They will go from strength to strength, and unto  
the GOD of gods appeareth every one of them in  
Sion."—(Psalm lxxxiv. 7.)

VOL. II.  
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# THE CHRISTIAN TAUGHT,

&c.

## PART II.

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THE first half of the Church's year, teaches us the Creed. From the latter half, we learn to keep the Commandments. During the time between Advent and Trinity Sunday, we have been learning how our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has perfected our redemption, to purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; now, we are to be taught more particularly what those good works are which He expects of us Christians as His peculiar people, and how we are to walk in them. For this reason it is that the dealings of God with His chosen people of old are read to us in the proper lessons, as being especially applicable and instructive to those whom He has redeemed from the slavery of sin, and whom He is now leading on to that heavenly Canaan, of which the earthly was but a type. In the Gospels, the life and teaching of our

blessed Lord are brought before us, as being the most perfect pattern we can strive to imitate, as well as the best instruction that can be provided for us; and such portions of the Epistles are selected as are most full of precepts of holy living. The Church has so arranged these services, that though her members have now no particular object upon which to fix their thoughts, yet every Sunday may still bring with it some practical lesson which even the youngest of them may understand and act upon; and thus does she provide that those who "dwell in her courts" may be led on "from strength to strength unto the presence of the God of gods in heaven."

### First Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 St. John, iv. 7. *Morning Lesson*, Josh. x.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, xvi. 19. *Evening Lesson*, Josh. xxiii.

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To keep the commandments of God, is a work entirely above our own strength; therefore this season opens with a prayer to Almighty God, that He would have compassion upon our weakness and send us the grace that is necessary to assist us in this great work.

Having thus prayed for divine strength, the epistle proceeds to instruct us in the first and great commandment; which is Love:\* love to God, and to our neighbour for His sake. The motive by which St. John urges Christians to this duty, seems especially suited to us, who have during the past season been duly commemorating the wonderful love of God in our redemption and sanctification. We have "seen and testified"† that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and we have been outwardly professing thankfulness to our God, for "sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins:"‡ now we are called upon to show

\* Verse 11; † verse 14; ‡ verse 10;

our gratitude to Him Who "has so loved us," by "loving one another."\* The terrible consequences of neglecting this divine command, are awfully brought before us in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which is chosen as the gospel for the day. The rich man in the parable was punished, not because he was rich, but because he loved and indulged himself, instead of loving and succouring his neighbour.† His example is therefore a warning to all, whether rich or poor, young or old, who live only for themselves, without caring for or forwarding the welfare of others. It serves also to teach us that self is the great enemy we have to conquer, and the subduing our own unruly wills and affections the great work we have to do, before we can enter that promised land to which our Saviour is leading us. Here, then, the lessons for the day supply us with comfort and encouragement; showing that if we fight against these spiritual enemies with as much zeal and ardour as the Israelites used in subduing their earthly foes, we may hope, like them, to be led on to victory.‡ As they were ordered to put their feet upon the necks of the kings whom they had conquered,|| so we must not rest satisfied until we have brought our thoughts, and our very senses into captivity unto the law of Christ. As they were to "let none remain"§ of the idolatrous nations which they took, so we are to imitate them in rooting out of our hearts with a holy severity every sin which our baptismal vow has bound us to renounce. Like them,

\* verse 11. † Gospel, verses 20, 21; ‡ Morn. Less.  
verse 42; || verse 23; § verse 28.

also, we must "be very courageous"\* to keep and to do whatever is written in the book of the law of the Lord, and to "cleave to the Lord our God,"† and to love Him. Like them, however, we shall not be able to "get the land in possession through our own strength, neither shall it be our own arm that shall help us, (Psalm xliv. 2, 3;) therefore while we are diligent in running the way of God's commandments, we must, in the words of the collect, acknowledge "the weakness of our mortal nature,"‡ and pray that He "Who fought for Israel"§ will also fight for us, and enable us "to please Him both in will and deed."

\* Even. Less. verse 6.    † Even. Less. verse 8.

‡ Collect.    § Morn. Less. verse 42.

## Second Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 St. John, iii. 13. *Morning Lesson*, Judges, iv.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, xiv. 16. *Evening Lesson*, Judges, v.

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LAST Sunday we were taught that the love and fear of God must be the beginning of all our obedience, and the motive of all our actions; to lead us onward still further in this holy duty, the services of this day consider the Almighty both as a merciful Father Who offers us His guidance,\* and as a gracious Sovereign Who invites us into His kingdom,† if only we will love Him as our Father, and obey Him as our King. The language of the collect will teach us in what this love of God consists, and how we may best show it. Christians are here represented as being “brought up” by their heavenly Father, just as children are trained by the hand of an earthly parent; consequently the love which we Christians bear to God, should be like that which a dutiful child feels for an affectionate father. It must not be an occasional feeling; but one which increases day by day, growing stronger and stronger, in proportion as our Father draws us nearer to Himself, and teaches us more of His ways; equally trusting to His good Providence, whether He

\* Collect. † Gospel.



sees fit to lead us on by blessings or by punishments. From the latter part of the collect we learn that as children grow to a full age under the care of earthly parents, so Christians who thus follow the guidance of their Heavenly Father, will grow up in His "steadfast fear and love:" from loving God as their Father, it will naturally follow that they will love their fellow Christians as their brethren, and thus will they be trained into the daily exercise of that Christian charity, which is described in the epistle as the distinguishing character of those who "have passed from death unto life."\* Now all who in baptism have been "raised from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness," have been made partakers of the "new life" here spoken of; therefore it is to all Christians, of every age and place, that St. John speaks, when he exhorts them to show the power of the new life that is in them by their love to their brethren.\* By this Scripture, then, let us examine and try ourselves. If we are cultivating the holy temper of Christian love here described, we may hope that the spiritual life given to us at our baptism is living and growing in us, and that God Who then adopted us for His children is bringing us up in His steadfast fear and love; but if we find any uncharitable thoughts taking root in our minds, or envious feelings springing up in our hearts, then let us be very watchful, and remembering the awful example of the murderer Cain, (1 St. John, iii. 12,) pray that we may not grieve God's Holy Spirit, or provoke Him to leave us to ourselves.

\* Verse 14.

Having seen in the first part of this day's service, how God adopts us into His family, and brings us up as His children, the gospel goes on to show how He also invites us into His kingdom. The "Supper"\* here spoken of, (and which is more minutely described and detailed in the parallel passage of St. Matthew's gospel under the name of the Marriage Feast,—St. Matthew, xxii. 2, &c.) represents the Kingdom or Church of Christ into which we Gentiles are now invited in the place of the Jews, who have slighted and refused the call. The messengers sent into the highways† and hedges to call in strangers to the feast, are the apostles and their successors, who have received Christ's commission to gather members into His Church, and who will continue to hold this commission even unto the end of the world. The good things provided at the supper‡ represent the privileges offered to all who have been made members of His Church on earth, and inheritors of His kingdom in heaven; the King who provides them is the Lord Himself: the oxen and fatlings which had been killed, represent the sacrifice of Christ's precious death, signified to the Jews by the blood of bulls and goats; and applied to Christians now by the commemorative sacrifice of Christ's most blessed Body and Blood in the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. To these precious privileges God has invited us all. He admitted us to them at our baptism; by His Word and ministers He continually urges us to profit by them. During the past season especially, He has set

\* Gospel, verse 16; † verse 23; compare St. Matt. xxii. 9; ‡ verse 24; compare St. Matt. xxii. 4.

before us, one by one, the several benefits purchased for us by Christ's redemption; and now He calls upon us by the voice of His Church to live as dutiful subjects, giving up ourselves obediently to follow His holy will and commandments. Worldly objects will, however, be continually tempting us to refuse this gracious call. Each of us, according to our age or station, has some pursuit or pleasure, which may take up too much of our thoughts, and prevent us from giving up our hearts to God. Like the excuses given by the guests in the parable,\* it may be innocent in itself, but if it occupies the place of God in our hearts, by drawing us away when we might be attending His house and ordinances, or taking up our thoughts when there, it is like the farm or the merchandize which excluded the invited guests from the royal supper; it excludes us from the privileges of Christ's Church on earth, and may, if not given up, exclude us from the blessings of His kingdom in heaven. Rather let us, as obedient children and dutiful subjects of our Heavenly Father and King, regulate even our worldly calling by the love and fear of God; and while we gladly relinquish any work when it may interfere with His service, let us, by our diligence at other times, show that even our daily occupation may be done to the glory of God.

While, however, we thus devote ourselves to the service of our Heavenly King, we shall, like the chosen people of Israel, be continually surrounded by enemies who would turn us out of the right way. In this our spiritual warfare,

\* Gospel, verse 18, &c.; St. Matthew, xxii. 5, &c.

we must, after the manner of the Israelites in the morning lesson, "cry unto the Lord for help;"\* we must imitate Barak by going out manfully to fight against them, taking for our guides those whom God has appointed† to be our pastors and teachers; even in the dreadful act of Jael, we find something profitable for our spiritual instruction, if we learn from it to root out of the tabernacle of our hearts, at any cost, (as she did from her earthly dwelling,) the enemy which has unfortunately found admittance there.‡

If we thus prove ourselves true "servants and soldiers" of Christ our King, "fighting manfully under His banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil," we may trust that He, Who has admitted us into His family, and called us into His kingdom, will also guide and govern us as His chosen people; and having enabled us to "overcome by the Blood of the Lamb," He may bring us to sing our "new song" of victory in His kingdom in heaven.¶ See also Rev. xii. 11; xiv. 3.

\* Morn. Less. verse 3; † verse 8; ‡ verse 21, &c.

¶ Evening Lesson.

### Third Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 St. Peter, v. 5. *Morning Lesson*, 1 Samuel, ii.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, xv. 1. *Evening Lesson*, 1 Samuel, iii.

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THE service for this day teaches us that our adoption into God's family and kingdom, will not procure for us freedom from troubles, but support and comfort under them; it tells us that as soldiers of Christ, we are subject to dangers and adversities,—but as children of God, we have means given to us by which to withstand them; and it shows that the first and principal of these means is prayer, accompanied by a spirit of penitence and humility.

The collect not only provides an appropriate prayer by which we may apply to God for aid in the midst of danger, but it also gives a lesson as to our manner of praying. It supposes that all God's children, worshipping in God's house, have come with "an hearty desire to pray,"\* and upon these only it begs a blessing; therefore all who come to Church without this "hearty desire," who do not make prayer their first and chief object in God's house, and whose petitions while there are cold and formal, exclude themselves with their own lips from the benefits asked for in this collect, and cannot

\* Collect.

expect that "mighty aid" for which it prays. But this "desire" for prayer is said to be the gift of God, therefore if we would obtain it, or increase in it when we have in some degree attained it, we must seek it in the way He has ordained,—and that is by penitence and humiliation. We must "keep our foot" (Eccles. v. 1) when we go to the house of God, and "before we pray we must prepare ourselves," (Ecclus. xviii. 23.) Of God's merciful readiness to receive those who thus approach Him, the gospel for the day affords us abundant proof; the joy of the shepherd who finds his wandering sheep,\* and of the woman who recovered her lost money,† being there put forth as faint images of that joy with which every returning prodigal is welcomed to the presence of God. But then, we read in the conclusion of the chapter that the prodigal son arose and confessed his sins before he ventured to approach his father's house, (St. Luke, xv. 20;) and so must we "arise and go to our Father" in sincere repentance, before we venture to approach His throne of grace. For this purpose, therefore, it is, that the Church, at the opening of her daily service has provided a confession in which her members acknowledge themselves "miserable sinners;" and confess that they have "erred and strayed from God's ways like lost sheep." It is true that all have not wandered so far as the prodigal, but all have many failings and frequent infirmities to lament over; and therefore the example of the prodigal, and the confession of the Church, apply in some measure to all, according to

\* Verse 6;    † verse 8.

their different degrees of sin. If then, like him, we are sincere in our confession of sin, and purposes of amendment, the blessings promised to him will also be ours; we shall be received as children in our Father's house;\* to penitence will succeed "an hearty desire to pray;" God will "mercifully hear our prayers;"† and those ministering spirits who rejoice at our return,† will be employed to "succour and defend us in all dangers and adversities."

The epistle shows us where we are to expect our greatest danger; it tells us of our great enemy the devil, who like a lion‡ roaring after his prey, is continually seeking to destroy men's souls when they are off their guard; and it warns us that to resist his attacks, watchfulness in our lives must be added to earnestness in our prayers, we must be "sober" and "vigilant"‡ as well as prayerful. Sobriety here means, not only a moderate and thankful use of God's creatures, but a continual mortification of our own passions and desires, until we bring our will into subjection to God's will; and to be "vigilant," signifies that we take continual care not to be surprised by sloth, or neglect, or the infirmities of our nature. Having done all this, we must still, as we are told, "cast all our care upon God," trusting in great humility, that "His mighty aid" for which we have prayed, will stablish, strengthen, and settle us.

The lessons, especially the song of Hannah || in that for the morning, speak to us of the comfort and support which God affords to His

\* Collect.    † Gospel, verse 10.    ‡ Epistle, verse 8.

|| Morning Lesson.

servants, who dwell in His house, leading a life of watchfulness and prayer; while the history of the sons of Eli\* gives an awful example to those who wander from it, casting off the high privileges to which they were once admitted. From the miserable end of these wicked men we also learn, that though God will mercifully receive the prodigal if he return, yet He may cut him off in the midst of his sins, leaving him no time for repentance.

How much more safe then is the condition of those, who, like the infant Samuel,† delight to dwell in God's house, engaged in His service, and watching for His gracious call.‡

Though God may not reveal Himself to them in the same manner that He did to Samuel, He yet speaks to them by His ministers, in His ordinances, and through the dealings of His Providence. Let us, therefore, watch and listen to His warning voice, and then let us value and improve the privilege as he did. Instead of being puffed up by spiritual advantages, let us, like him, quietly go about our daily business|| in a spirit of humble fear and obedience, and like him, we shall grow in God's grace and favour. The adversary may tempt, and even try to destroy us; but "the Lord will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail."§

\* Even. Less. verse 13. † Morn. Less. verse 18.

‡ Even. Less. verse 4; || verse 15;

§ Morn. Less. verse 9.



### Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Rom. viii. 18.      *Morning Lesson*, 1 Sam. xii.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, vi. 36.      *Evening Lesson*, 1 Sam. xiii.

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HITHERTO the Church has been dwelling on the dangers and adversities which God's people are to expect in this life; to-day she encourages and cheers them with the hope of the rest which remaineth for them when they have passed through the waves of this troublesome world. On this blessed state, then, the epistle fixes our thoughts, giving us some faint idea of its happiness, and showing upon what grounds we may hope to attain to it. In the first verse of this passage, St. Paul assures us that the glory of this future state is such, that it will much more than make amends for the sharpest earthly sufferings;\* then he goes on to show that if a faint and uncertain hope of immortality has ever been the expectation of "the creature,"† and of "the whole creation," (that is, of mankind in general,) how much more may we, the sons of God, rejoice in the "sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection!" Even here we have "in us" the beginnings of that glory which shall hereafter be "revealed" or made manifest.‡ We have been taken from

\* Verse 18;    † verse 21;    ‡ verse 18.

“the bondage of corruption” and translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God; the “first fruits of the Spirit” have been bestowed upon us, and we may therefore wait for the redemption of our bodies,\* knowing that “if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us.” (Romans, viii. 11.)

But while the epistle for this day thus holds out to us the blessed hope of everlasting life, the remainder of the services would remind us that “whoso hath this hope in him, must purify himself, even as He is pure;” walking through things temporal, only as a passage to things eternal. The gospel, therefore, describes the temper of mind which must be cultivated on earth, as a preparation for a happy eternity. It tells us of the love and charity and concord which we must exercise here, if we would hope to join that blessed company, whose delight it is to sing “peace on earth, and good-will to man!” It teaches us that as our Father Which is in heaven is merciful, so they who hope to dwell with Him must take His universal goodness for their guide and pattern;† and lastly, it leads us to self-examination as an important step towards the exercise of this Christian temper, for he that is conscious of his own continual failings, will never be hard upon the faults of his brethren; if we are aware of the beam that is within our own eye, we shall never be hasty in pointing out the mote that is in our brother’s eye. This heavenly temper is, however,

\* Epistle, verse 23.      † Verse 36.

far beyond mortal strength, and will only be attained by those who, according to the spirit of this day's collect, walk through things temporal under the guidance and protection of Almighty God.

To such a spirit of trust and submission as is expressed in this prayer, the preceding collects for this season have been gradually leading us. In them, we have acknowledged ourselves God's children and servants ;"\* we have declared Him to be our defence, and implored His mighty aid.† If, then, we have been living up to these professions, and really using these high privileges, we shall by experience have found Him to be the "protector of all that put their trust in Him ;"‡ we shall confess that any advance in holiness that we have made, or any small degree of strength we may have gained, has been entirely His work ; and encouraged by the sense of past mercies, we shall pray that He Who has begun a good work in us, will continue it even unto the end, "increasing and multiplying upon us His mercy" according to our need. Where God's grace is not thus continually sought, and His guidance continually followed, the best beginnings will fail, and the strongest resolutions come to nought. Of this we have a striking example in each of the proper lessons of the day. We read in the morning, that God's chosen people, whom He had redeemed out of Egypt, had nourished in the wilderness, and defended on every side, fell into the grievous sin of distrusting His Divine protection, and asking a king ;|| and in the

\* Second Sunday after Trinity. † Third Sunday after Trinity. ‡ Collect. || Morn. Less. verse 19.

evening, we see how Saul, by relying on his own judgment, instead of implicitly following God's command, was led to commit the act of disobedience which cost him his kingdom.\* Let us, then, profit by their fall, and take to ourselves the instruction which the Church conveys to us this day. She addresses us as God's redeemed people, and tells us of the certain rest and inheritance which is laid up for us; but she bids us take heed to our ways, lest "a promise being left us of entering into that rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." At the same time, however, she encourages us by the assurance, that the Lord will not fail His people for His great Name's sake; and that "if only we fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all our heart,"† He will guide us safely through things temporal to the full enjoyment of things eternal.

\* Even. Less. verses 13, 14.      † Morn. Less. verse 24.

### Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 St. Peter, iii. 8.    *Morning Lesson*, 1 Sam. xv.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, v. 1.        *Evening Lesson*, 1 Sam. xvii.

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ENTIRE and lasting happiness is only to be found (as we learned last Sunday) in the possession of "things eternal;" yet even in our passage through things temporal God has provided for us, if we serve Him, such a peace as the world can neither give nor take away. Where to find this peace, and how to attain it, is what we gather from the services of this day. The collect teaches us to look to the Church of Christ as "the place in which to hide us in," the sanctuary in which we may "serve God in all godly quietness."\* Into this holy sanctuary we have had the privilege of being called. God in His mercy has separated us from the world around to make us members of that visible Body of which Christ is the Head. He has gathered us into it as into a "net,"† in which He would safely lead us on to the shore of life eternal.

This is one of the thoughts suggested to us by the portion of Scripture selected as the gospel for the day. This passage relates to us the miracle by which our Lord first intimated to

\* Collect.        † Gospel, verse 5, &c.

His apostles their divine calling. Christ, our Saviour, walking by the lake of Gennesareth, finds St. Peter and his companions engaged in their usual occupation of fishing.\* Coming upon them at a moment when all their labour has been vain, He tries their faith by urging them to repeat their unsuccessful toil.† St. Peter readily obeys His words, and finds in the miraculous draught of fishes, a prompt reward for his faith and obedience. But while the apostles see in this miracle only a relieving of their temporal wants, our Lord leaves them not, until He has impressed upon their minds, that there is in it a higher and a deeper meaning. Thus He would lead their thoughts upwards from their temporal to their spiritual calling.‡ He would show them that from henceforth the net which they are to fill is the kingdom of heaven upon earth, into which they are to gather "of every kind." (St. Matthew, xiii. 47.) The prey they are to catch is the souls of men; and the shore for which they are to make is God's kingdom in heaven. Faith and obedience are the means by which they must work,—while on our Lord's Word and His presence alone, they must depend for the success of their labours.

We then, who through their means have been received into this net, are by the mercy of God set forward on the way of salvation. In the midst of the storms and troubles of the world, we may there find in Jesus Christ our Head, an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast.

While, however, the Church of Christ is still

\* Gospel, verses 1, 2;    † verse 4;    ‡ verse 10.

militant here on earth, it must ever be subject to many accidents and dangers from without; while it is made up of "multitudes of every kind," both bad and good, it cannot be free from discord and schism within. How much then its safety may be influenced by each individual member we learn from the remainder of the services for this day. In these holy lessons, we are taught so to live as to secure to ourselves, to our fellow-members, and to the Church in general, that peace and rest, which God intended should be therein enjoyed. The first and most effectual means of doing this, is prayer. He Who was willing, for ten's sake, to have turned away His wrath from the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, even now "listens to the prayer of the poorest and most destitute member of His Church, and despises not his desire." (Psalm cii. 17.) The Most High, Who ruleth in the kingdom of men, will therefore hear the supplications of those who, in this day's collect, pray that God would so order the "course of this world," as will most benefit His holy Church. Numberless examples in Scripture will prove to us how God's governance of the world has ever been ordered by this rule. Under the patriarchs, the Church was preserved as His chosen family. It was not allowed to suffer from the wickedness of the whole race of kings who disgraced the lines of Israel and Judah. It was preserved through the Babylonian captivity; nor was the sceptre "suffered to depart from Judah" until "Shiloh" came. (Genesis, xlix. 10.) Likewise, after the coming of Christ, the prayers of God's persecuted

people were heard, and the Church was preserved in the midst of trials, persecutions, and afflictions. Let us then not doubt, but earnestly believe, that prayer will do as much for us as it did for them. The humblest and poorest Christian, who sincerely offers up the prayer appointed for this day, may influence, in some mysterious way, even the inscrutable decrees of God's providence. It may be his privilege to avert those troubles which our sins have deserved, and thus to draw down a blessing upon that Church from which he receives such great benefits.

And not only by our prayers, but by our actions also, may we advance or retard the well-being of the Church of Christ. Saul followed his own judgment instead of implicitly obeying the commands of God.\* By this he lost the privilege of being the leader of God's chosen people,† and missed the opportunity of destroying the enemies of God. David, on the contrary, by his faith and diligence in obeying the Divine commands, became the champion of God's glory, and the defender of His people Israel. The humblest and youngest of the sons of Jesse, (1 Samuel, xvi. 11,) became, in God's hands, a powerful instrument for good. But while we admire David's victory, we must not forget to follow David's example. The Church of Christ has even now spiritual enemies to contend against, as powerful as those from which David freed the Church of Israel. Goliath, the uncircumcised Philistine, is but a faint type of him, who "as a roaring lion ever goeth about, seeking whom he may devour."

\* Morn. Less. verse 9;    † verse 23.



Against this common foe, we, as members of Christ, have each one bound ourselves to fight. We must, therefore, go out against him, "in the name of the Lord,"\* Whose we are, and under Whose banner we serve. We must set ourselves severally to oppose him, in that particular point in which he most attacks us, trusting as David did, not to carnal weapons, but to the leading of God's good providence,† and the assistance of His grace. By thus resisting the devil in our own persons, we shall each one be doing our part towards the defence of the whole body. We shall all be helping to turn away from the Church of which we are members those evils which the craft and subtlety of the devil continually worketh against us. Then "when the enemy shall come in like a flood," the Spirit of the Lord, by Whom we are united and strengthened, "shall lift up a standard against him." (Isaiah, lix. 19.)

Thus it is, that by diligence in prayer, and in our Christian profession, we may promote the outward welfare of the Church of Christ. No less may we contribute to its peace and harmony within, by living in love and unity amongst ourselves;‡ for by this means we impart to our fellow-members some portion of that "blessing" to which we have been "called."|| In our intercourse one with another, many things may happen to disturb the concord of those who call themselves brethren. Even without wrong on our part, our good may be evil spoken of, our motives misconstrued, and

\* Even. Less. verse 45; † verses 36, 37. ‡ Epistle;

|| verse 9.

our actions maligned. In such a case, the members of Christ, must look up for guidance to the example of our Divine Head. As the epistle for this day directs, they must, like Him, render good for evil, blessing for railing.\* Then, even though the cause of the grievance be not removed, they will have peace with God and with themselves. They will neither be afraid nor terrified, knowing that nothing shall be suffered to "harm those who are followers of that which is good."†

We learn then, on this day, how great even on earth is the peace of those who love God's law. (Psalm cxix. 165.) The "Name of the Lord" into which they have been baptized, is indeed to them "a strong tower, into which they run, and are safe." (Prov. xviii. 10.) Though tossed to and fro upon the waves of this world, they may yet "serve God quietly in the Church of Christ."‡

\* Verse 9; † verse 13; ‡ Collect.

## Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Romans, vi. 3.    *Morning Lesson*, 2 Sam. xii.  
*Gospel*, St. Matthew, v. 20.    *Evening Lesson*, 2 Sam. xix.

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TO-DAY our thoughts are recalled to that blessed state of peace and rest to which Christians look forward in the Church triumphant. Of this blessed state no earthly words can give any idea, for it passeth man's understanding to conceive it. The nearest approach that can be made to it in this life is that of Christians serving God in His Church on earth. Still, however, this is but as the shadow going before the substance, as the foretaste of the actual enjoyment, the training by which we are here made meet to receive those "good things"\* which are in store for us hereafter.

This lower state, being then, the preparation for that which is to follow, the contemplation of it in which we were engaged last Sunday, will have helped us to raise our minds towards that higher existence on which we meditate to-day.

The chief happiness of heaven consists in the adoration of God. The hosts of the Lord praise Him, (Psa. ciii. 10;) His saints serve Him day and night in His temple, (Rev. vii. 15.) The

\* Collect.

heavenly beings before the throne rest not day nor night, crying "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," (Rev. iv. 8;) and the voice of a great multitude is continually heard shouting, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," (Rev. xix. 6.) If, then, we would hope to join that blessed company and share their employment, surely we must strive even on earth to cultivate something of that temper which forms so great a part of their enjoyment in heaven. "The love of God"\* must be our ruling principle, and His service our chief delight. This is what the Church would seem to teach us by praying in this day's collect for such a love of Him, as may fit us to "obtain His promises."

But the epistle and gospel would lead us on still further. From them we learn how by our lives, as well as by our lips, we may show that we love God above all other things. In the former, St. Paul carries us back to the time of our baptism, and reminds us of our Christian obligation in that holy sacrament. It was then that we became "dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ."† The covering or sprinkling of our body with water, was a token that our earthly lusts and affections were to be "buried with Christ;"‡ while the rising again out of the water, implied that "from henceforth we should walk in newness of life." From this time forward the love of God was to take in our souls that place, which would have been otherwise usurped by the love of the world; heaven, instead of earth, was to be our home, and the good things of heaven,

\* Collect. † Verse 11; ‡ verse 4.

not those of this life, our portion. Such being then, the blessed state in which we were placed before we had power to choose for ourselves, it remains for us to learn how every member of Christ should strive to walk worthy of it.

Each one of us, whatever be our particular position, may do something to show our love to God. God teaches us this by the different situations in which He places us, and the different duties He gives us to perform. But He also gives us even a more sure word of prophecy than the dealings of His Providence. His own blessed Son Himself has "opened His mouth" (see St. Matt. v. 2,) to tell us who are "they that are blessed," and they that shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." In the gospel for the day He teaches us to consider the love which we bear to our brethren, as the test of our true love of God :\* and thus He reminds us of the important truth without which the lessons which we have this day been considering would be incomplete. It is said in another part of Holy Scripture that "if any man say he love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen?" (1 St. John, iv. 20.) If, then, while we profess to "love God above all other things,"† we bear malice or hatred or uncharitableness in our hearts, our "righteousness" is but as the "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees;"‡ and we must take heed lest we fall into their condemnation. It is only when we dwell in love with our brethren, that we are allowed to hope that "God dwelleth in us, and we in God,

\* Verse 22. † Collect. ‡ Gospel, verse 20.

for God Himself is Love," (1 St. John, iv. 16.) Such are some of the rules and precepts by which God would here train and prepare us for His presence.

In following them we shall find the examples of the Saints of God in past times to be a special help and guidance. Like a cloud of witnesses, the examples of these holy men compass us about to help us also in running the race that is set before us. Week by week, and Sunday by Sunday, some one or other of them is brought before us by the Church, for "reproof, or correction, or instruction in righteousness." David, the man after God's own heart, is he who at this time engages our attention. Last Sunday, we beheld him as a youth, going out in innocence and freshness to fight against the enemies of God. To-day, he comes before us as a penitent, deeply fallen indeed, but, by the mercy of God, rising again unto newness of life.\* Though he had grievously sinned, yet the love of God was not extinguished in his heart. When, therefore, the Lord reproved him, he sorrowfully acknowledged his sin; He turned himself, and repented, and so was converted and saved. God, indeed, did severely chastise him in this world; for we find, from Holy Scripture, that his after life was one series of reverses and afflictions;† yet he bore them with patience and cheerfulness, looking forward (as we find from his own words) to "the plentiful goodness which God hath laid up for them that love Him," (Psa. xxxi. 21.) Thus, he affords instruction and comfort to those repenting sinners whom "God

\* Morn. Less. verse 13. † See Even. Less.

chastises in the flesh that their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," who suffer now from the loving hand of God that affliction "which worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Nor amidst the examples in Holy Scripture profitable for our learning must we forget that of Barzillai, whose conduct, as recorded to us this evening, carries out the spirit of this day's services. In him, then, we see an example of one of those servants of God to whom death is gain, and the end of this life, peace ; who having cast all their care upon God, are not forsaken of Him in time of age, and when their strength faileth them ; and being freed from the cares and pleasures of earth, wait calmly and patiently for the "good things" which God hath prepared "in heaven for them that love Him." \*

Having thus had the prize of our high calling set before us in the services for this day, we would learn from them to "forget those things which are behind, and to reach forward to those things which are before," (Phil. iii. 13, 14,) in order that we may attain unto it ; we would strive, like the apostle, that "no earthly thing should move us ; neither should we count our life dear unto ourselves, so that we might finish our course with joy," (Acts, xx. 24.) We would "keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, knowing that this alone will bring us peace at the last," (Psalm, xxxvii. 38.)

\* Collect. See Even. Less. verses 34-36.

### Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Romans, vi. 19. *Morning Lesson*, 2 Sam. xxi.  
*Gospel*, St. Mark, viii. 1. *Evening Lesson*, 2 Sam. xxiv.

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THE growth of Religion in the Christian is gradual. It grows up in his soul, just as life does in the stem of a plant or tree. This comparison, so often set before us in Holy Scripture, is that by which the Church instructs us on this day.

We have seen, in the services for last Sunday, that the love of God is the root of all holiness, the very foundation of our Christian life. To-day we are taught the different degrees by which this principle gradually unfolds itself. We learn, how by the influence of God's grace, that which was once implanted into our nature is made to "bring forth fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life." \*

The collect goes back to the lessons inculcated last Sunday, with regard to the love of God ; but to impress upon us still more forcibly how this divine love is to take possession of our hearts, it makes use of an expression borrowed from the natural world,—it prays that the Love of God may be "grafted"† into them. Now we know that *grafting* is the strongest link that

\* Epistle, verse 22.    † Collect.



can bind any two substances together. To be properly *grafted* upon the old stem, the new shoot must not be simply joined to it, but so united as to become one with it, — to grow together with it, and make it partake of its character. Just so it is with ourselves. Having been joined to the Body of Christ, and baptized into His death, we have had a new life implanted in us, but we must not stop short here. To be truly advancing in this new life, the love of God, which is its ruling principle, must grow up in us, making all our actions partake of its character, and bringing our very nature under its influence. Those, who, by the mercy of God, have thus had His love “grafted” into their hearts, are brought into that state which the epistle for this day describes. To them “old things are passed away, all things are become new.” Sin, therefore, which belonged to the old stock of their corrupt nature, must be put away; and holiness, which comes from the new shoot, must be their fruit.

Gradually, and by little and little, must each one of Christ’s members lay aside some sin, by which his old nature would most easily beset him, and cultivate some virtue which is the fruit of his new birth, for this is what the apostle means, when he desires that we who have “yielded our members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, should now yield them as servants to righteousness unto holiness.”\* It is by thus improving the first of God’s good gifts that we may hope for an answer to the second petition which the collect contains; according to God’s own promise, that

\* Epistle, verse 19.

“to him that asketh shall more be given, that he may have more abundance.” (St. Matthew, xxv. 29.) But to enter rightly into the full force of this second petition, we must again go to nature for our learning. The graft, however good in itself, would, if left unwatered and untended, soon wither and die; so would it be with the love of God in our hearts; therefore we pray that He Who first implanted would still continue to “increase”\* in us true religion. Again, nourishment is necessary for the growth of a plant. Unless it be continually nourished by sap, no stem would come to maturity; so is the strengthening influence of God’s grace necessary for the growth of religion in our souls. It is only when God sends down the dew of His heavenly blessing in answer to our prayers that we can hope to be “nourished with all goodness.”\* God, however, does provide all things that be necessary for our souls, as well as for our bodies. He, Who “giveth food to all flesh, and feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him,” will not suffer that any of His little ones that cry unto Him should perish for lack of grace. Of this, a comforting proof is afforded us in the gospel for the day. Here we behold Christ our Saviour in the midst of His people, providing for their bodily wants and infirmities.† As He did to the fainting multitude, so does He even now. He calls men to Him‡ in the order of His holy Church, and by the hands of those whom He has commissioned to serve it, He gives to every one his portion of meat in due season—milk for babes, strong meat for those of full age.

\* Collect. † Verse 2; ‡ verse 6.

Thus it is that, from the cradle to the grave, Christians find in the Church of Christ that which is necessary to nourish and support their souls. The grace of God given in holy baptism is strengthened and brought out by the constant teaching of God's Holy Word. The little ones of Christ's flock, trained and instructed in God's house by God's own appointed minister, are brought in due time to their bishop or chief pastor, that they may receive at his hands the confirmation and strengthening of these good beginnings. Then they are admitted to the higher mysteries of the Christian faith; they are allowed to feed spiritually on the precious Body and Blood of their blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And so do the members of Christ grow up in grace. In prayer and holy communion, in the study of God's blessed word, and constant round of holy services, they "go on from strength to strength," "rooted and built up in Him Who is head over all, even Christ." (Col. ii. 7; Eph. i. 22.) Still, however, we must never rest satisfied, so long as we are only in the courts of the Lord on earth. Until we reach the presence of the God of gods in heaven, God's grace must be sought, not once for all, but continually, and day by day. It is the neglect of this great truth which causes so many good beginnings to fail, and holy resolutions to wither. Of this we have constant examples in those portions of Holy Scripture set before us at this time. Saul, chosen by God Himself to be the leader of His people, might have gone on in his fear and favour, yet we have read how his kingdom was forfeited by

disobedience ; and now we find his bloody act of persecution visited even upon his posterity.\* And if this may be said of Saul, what shall we say of David, the man after God's own heart ? Him whom last Sunday we beheld falling into grievous sin, and as a penitent rising again, we now behold yielding to the temptations of Satan, through vanity and pride.† Great need have we then to take warning by these examples, and to pray (as the Church would teach us on this day) that He Who has grafted, increased, and nourished us in all goodness, would continue to "keep us" in the same.

Thus does the collect for this day, with its accompanying services, show to Christians how they are trained and nurtured in the house of God. As "trees of the Lord's planting," grafts of God's true vine, they are brought into the courts of the Lord to be nourished and brought up by Him. Death, which, as the wages of sin, would have been their portion, is withdrawn, and the gift of a new life is implanted in us through Jesus Christ our Lord.‡ God, however, deals with us in spiritual as in temporal things. While He reserves the increase as His free gift, He gives it only in proportion as we plant, and cultivate, and water. Let us, then, learn from the services of this day to keep and train our hearts with as much diligence as if the success depended upon ourselves, while at the same time we trust entirely to the "power and might" of Him Who is the "author and giver of all good things."||

So shall we indeed become as "trees planted

\* Morn. Less. verse 1.    † Even. Less. verses 1, 10.

‡ Epistle, verse 23.    || Collect.

by the water-side, whose leaf shall not wither, but who will bring forth fruit in due season ;” and thus, living here as “green olive trees in the house of the Lord,” (Psalm lii. 9,) we shall “go on from strength to strength,” until we “flourish in the courts of the house of our God.” (Psalms lxxxiv. 7 ; xcii. 12.)

### Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Romans, viii. 12. *Morning Lesson*, 1 Kings, xiii.  
*Gospel*, St. Matt., vii. 15. *Evening Lesson*, 1 Kings, xvii.

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HAVING been planted in the courts of the Lord's house, we are watched over by the special care of His good providence. The same merciful Lord Who engrafted us into His Church on earth, still gently guides and leads us, not in the paths which we think best, but in those which will most safely lead us to His courts in heaven. Such is the blessed lesson which is set before us this day. All mankind indeed are His care. This truth, which the opening of the collect teaches us, Holy Scripture everywhere confirms. God giveth to all "life, and breath, and all things." (Acts, xvii. 25.) He looketh down from His throne in heaven, and beholds all the children of men. He "fashioneth all the hearts of them, and understandeth all their works." (Psalm xxxiii. 14.) "All nations before Him are as nothing." (Isaiah, xl. 17.) He "ruleth the kingdoms of this world, and giveth them to whomsoever He will." Thus does the neverfailing providence of God rule and govern all men, as well those who know Him as those who know Him not. While, however, all mankind, heathens as well

as Christians, are thus compelled to feel the mighty hand of God "ordering all things in heaven and earth,"\* it remains for Christians only to trust themselves (as we do in the second part of this day's collect) to the protecting hand of God's good providence.

God's dealings are often far above the understanding of our mortal minds. It is often "hard" (Psalm lxxiii. 15, 16) for us to understand why those things which seem to be for our wealth, prove to us occasions of falling, while trials most grievous to bear are sent in mercy for our good. Only when we go into the sanctuary of God to "ponder these things" are we allowed to "see in them the loving kindness of the Lord." (Psalm cvii. 43.) It is here that we learn to value things as "profitable" only so far as they advance or retard us in the favour of God; here that we learn to ask God, not for what seems good and pleasant to ourselves, but to pray that He will "put away" from us "those things which He sees hurtful," and give us those things which He sees "profitable" to our souls' good. Having thus prayed in the collect, the epistle goes on to tell us what those things are which really harm us. To redeemed Christians, who have been freed from sin and born again to a new life, nothing can be truly hurtful but what entangles them again in those things from which they have been rescued; nothing can be truly profitable but what brings them nearer to the prize of their heavenly inheritance. The temptations of the flesh, then, which in our baptism we have renounced, are our greatest enemies.

\* Collect.

However they may now seem "pleasant to the eyes," (Genesis, iii. 6,) and sweet to the taste, we must not live after them, for if we do so, we shall die eternally.\* As adopted children of God's family, joint heirs with His own Son,† we live for better things; we look forward to higher blessings. Better is it that we should suffer affliction now with Christ, when God wills it, if by these means He leads us to glory hereafter.‡ But when thus by suffering, God purges and prunes the living branches of His own "true vine," He does so that they may bring forth fruit. (St. John, xv. 2.) He knows us by our fruits.¶ This is what the gospel for the day would teach us from our Saviour's own lips. Though the words, as spoken at first, refer to the prophets and teachers of Christ's flock, yet it is clear, by what follows, that we may apply them to all those whom God has planted, and is bringing up in His vineyard. Just as naturally as the husbandman looks for fruit upon the tree which he has planted, and cultivated, and watered, so does God expect to find the fruits of the Spirit in those on whom He has poured the dew of His heavenly grace; and as the husbandman retains in his vineyard the fruitful and profitable branches only, so God admits into His kingdom in heaven only those who "do the will of their Father Which is in heaven."§

But what the collect, epistle, and gospel teach us by precept, the lessons would seem to carry out by example. In them we behold the never-failing providence of God over-ruling and

\* Epistle, verse 13; † verses 16, 17; ‡ verse 17.

¶ Gospel, verse 20; § verse 21.



directing the affairs of men for their good and His glory. First, we see His hand in the re-proval of the wicked king Jeroboam;\* and then, no less clearly, though less directly, do we trace his dealings in the lives of the other scripture characters who are brought before us this day. We see in them how God may bring mercy out of chastisements, life out of death. In the history of the disobedient prophet, read to us this morning, we have an instance of one who, yielding to the temptations of the flesh,† was punished by the hand of the Lord.‡ The very means which he used to preserve temporal life were to him the occasion of temporal death. Had he remained without food at the Word of the Lord, the providence of God could have sustained him; the food which he took in disobedience to God's command, cost him his life. Thus it is that things in themselves "profitable" may, if used without God's blessing, prove to us "hurtful." Yet in the midst of chastisements, God remembers mercy. He did indeed punish with temporal death the good prophet who fell into sin; yet still more sorely does the Lord chasten Jeroboam, the impious king, and the wicked prophet of Bethel. They are allowed to live on in sin—he is taken away from the evil to come; they are punished with spiritual—he with temporal death only. Thus does the Lord "rebuke those whom He loves, and chasten those whom He receives." He oftentimes chastises them in the flesh, that their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In contrast to this account of the disobedient

\* Morn. Less. verse 1, &c.; † verse 19; ‡ verse 24.

prophet, we turn in the evening to two cases of an opposite kind—that of Elijah, fed by the ravens,\* and that of the widow and her son, living under the providence of God, and supported by His care. The act of mercy and charity,† by which this woman relieved the prophet, would have appeared to human eyes hurtful to her temporal interests. It would have seemed to bring with it nothing less than death itself; yet, done in faith, and at the word of the Lord, it became by the providence of God profitable for temporal as well as spiritual good. Not only were her wants relieved in the present necessity,‡ but a still greater blessing was bestowed upon her—even the restoration to life of her only son.¶

We are taught, then, on this day, to “commit our way unto the Lord, and put our trust in Him, knowing that He will give us those good things which are truly profitable for us;” to “cast all our care upon God, for He careth for us.” When He sends us prosperity, we may take it joyfully, love it as His gift, and use it to His glory; when He sends us adversity, we must receive it as a chastening profitable to our souls’ good. Thus will “all things work together for good to those who love God.” “All the paths of the Lord will be mercy and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.” Even the chastening, which for the present seemeth to be not joyous but grievous, afterwards yieldeth the “peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.” § (Heb. xii. 11.)

\* Even. Less. † verse 15; ‡ verse 16. ¶ verse 22.  
§ See services for last Sunday and gospel for to-day.

## Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 Cor. x. 1.      *Morning Lesson*, 1 Kings, xviii.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, xvi. 1.      *Evening Lesson*, 1 Kings, xix.

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WE have seen how mercifully God on His part guides and governs us through life, by the strengthening of His grace and the leading of His providence. Now we have to learn how we, on our part, are to "follow his counsel, so that we may be hereafter received into glory." For this purpose, then, it is that the history of the Israelites is brought before us in this day's epistle, as our warning and example. Their passage through the wilderness is in all things a type of our passage through the world. The same mighty Saviour Who is now present with the members of the Christian Church, to lead them to their heavenly inheritance, is the same as He Who guided the Church of Israel to their land of promise. He is "the rock" on Whom they built their hopes of salvation, as we do ours;\* only they saw Him but darkly, through types and by shadows; we through sacraments and ordinances of His own appointment. Thus: their passage through the Red Sea† is that "whereby God figures to us His holy baptism." It set them forward in

\* Epistle, verse 4;      † verse 2.

their journey to the earthly Canaan, just as baptism sets us forward in our way to the kingdom of heaven. The cloud,\* by which they were directed, represents the Holy Spirit of God, by Which baptised Christians are guided and illuminated.

In the water flowing from the barren rock we see an emblem of that refreshing grace which flows to Christians out of Christ's rock, the Church; while the manna, "eaten by our fathers in the wilderness," prefigures that heavenly food which preserves the bodies and souls of Christians unto everlasting life—even the most precious Body and Blood of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus were they, like ourselves, "grafted, increased, and nourished"† by the hand of God. But if their state was a type of ours as to its blessings and its privileges; so was it also as to its temptations and its sins. Here, then, we are to take warning from them. Remembering that many who might have reached the land of Canaan were "overthrown in the wilderness,"‡ let us also take heed that we lose not the prize of our high calling. The same sins which excluded them from the earthly, will also shut us out of the heavenly Canaan. We, like them, become "idolators," when we are led astray or entangled in the things of this world; we sin as they did, when we murmur against the ways of God's providence; and when we neglect His commands, or disregard His promises, we, like them "tempt Christ."|| We "think scorn of His pleasant land, and give no credence unto His word." (See Psalm cvi. 24.)

\* Epistle, verse 2; † See two preceding Sundays.

‡ Epistle, verse 5; || verse 9.

## NINTH SUNDAY AFTER

This world, then, is to us as it was to the Israelites, a place of trial, our use or abuse of its good things waiting for our safe arrival in the world to come. the lesson which we draw from the parable of the unjust steward, read to us in the gospel of this day. In reading this passage, we must remember that a parable is merely a figure of speech, which teaches us high and heavenly mysteries by means of common and familiar things. The persons mentioned in it are not held up for our imitation in their own characters, but merely according to the part they bear in the parable. Thus an inanimate object, or even a bad man, may be put to teach us a divine lesson. So it is with the unjust steward. With his own conduct we have nothing to do; but only to learn from it the lesson which our Lord intended it should convey. The office of a steward represents the relation in which Christians stand to God with regard to their worldly possessions. They have received them only in trust, "to minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold gifts of God." The steward in the parable thinks only how to make such a use of the riches committed to his charge as will be profitable to his future welfare.\* He neglects no opportunity of securing to himself, through their means, an entrance into a permanent habitation; and so it is that he teaches us a profitable lesson.

While we live in this world, we each hold gifts at the hand of God, by the faithful or unfaithful use of which we obtain for ourselves entrance into or banishment from, the courts

\* Gospel, verses 3 and 4.

of heaven. "Riches, when used by the owners thereof to their hurt," make it difficult, and even impossible, for them to enter into the kingdom of heaven, (Eccles. v. 13, St. Matt. xix. 25;) while, used to the glory of God, they may become a means of admission into the everlasting habitations. And, as with riches, so also is it with all other talents. Time, and learning, and spiritual advantages, are all of them gifts for which every one of us must give an account of himself to God. Let, then, the "children of Light" learn to improve these precious talents as the children of this world use their earthly goods. With as much diligence as the worldly man improves his possessions to his temporal advantage, so let the Christian use them to God's glory and his neighbour's good. Thus will things which in themselves are indifferent, and which might become hurtful, turn on the contrary to our spiritual advancement. Even the "mammon of unrighteousness,"\* used in this manner may secure for us "a treasure in the heavens which faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."

Seeing then how much depends upon the way in which Christians pass through the world, and how many and great are the dangers which beset them in it, we must trust for safety to no less a power than the help and direction of Almighty God. To Him, then, we pray in the collect for this day that He would grant us "the spirit to think and to do always such things as be rightful." The examples of the Saints of God, in all ages, and especially those brought before us this day, show how

\* Gospel, verse 9,

God watches over His faithful servants, who walk through this world by faith, and not by sight. Obadiah, the faithful servant of God, was preserved unharmed in the midst of idolators. Though exposed to the temptations of a wicked court, he yet continued to "fear the Lord greatly."\* Elijah, by his faith, integrity, and zeal, not only preserved himself, but drew others also into the way of righteousness.

The people who witnessed the miracle by which his prayer was answered, were brought to acknowledge that "the Lord, He is the God;"† and even we, at the present day, benefit by the teaching of the prophet; for in his solemn warning not to "halt between two opinions,"‡ we find a lesson applicable to the people of God now as it was then. The words would even seem to sum up, as in a whole, that which the Church especially inculcates on this day. We who live in the wilderness of this world,|| have to choose between God and mammon, just as those who lived in the midst of idolators, had to choose between God and Baal. If, then, we have chosen the Lord for our God, we must follow and serve Him only: we must put away from our hearts every idol which would take His place, making all things, even the "unrighteous mammon,"§ to minister to His glory. But, as if to show us how great are our changes and chances of this mortal life, we behold in the evening lesson this same Elijah, full of human and bodily weakness, "wishing for himself that he might die."¶ Yet the Lord does not leave him here; for the

\* Morn. Less. verse 3; † verse 39; ‡ verse 21.

|| See Epistle. - § See Gospel. ¶ Even. Less. verse 4.

“angel of the Lord ever tarrieth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” God speaks to him and encourages him with His own voice,\* after having fed and sustained him by the hand of an angel.

Having thus “heard with our ears what God did for our fathers in their time of old,” let not our hearts be troubled. If we walk cautiously through the wilderness of this world, praying for God’s guidance, profiting by His warnings, and following His instructions, we need fear no evil. “There hath no temptation taken us, but such as is common unto man; but God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear it.”† Though of ourselves we can do nothing, yet, by the grace of God regulating each thought and desire, we shall be enabled to live according to His will.”‡

\* Even. Less. verse 13. † Epistle, verse 13.

‡ Collect.



## Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 Cor. xii. 1.      *Morning Lesson*, 1 Kings, xxi.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, xix. 41. *Evening Lesson*, 1 Kings, xxii.

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IN passing through the temptations of this present evil world, the Christian's strength is prayer. Prayer, then, is the subject which the Church brings before us this day. Having made us feel our need of God's help, she now leads us to the only means of seeking it, and teaches withal so to seek as to find it. That much will depend upon the manner in which we offer up our petitions Holy Scripture itself warns us; for in the epistle of St. James it is said that we may ask, and yet "receive not, if we ask amiss," (St. James, iv. 3.) The collect then teaches us, that to approach God acceptably, we must do so in a spirit of humility and entire dependance upon Him. We, who are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and who have nothing that we did not receive, must feel that we are not worthy of the very least of those mercies for which we pray; when, therefore, we "take upon us to speak unto the Lord," we can come before Him in no other manner than as His "humble servants."\* And to this temper of humility and self-abasement, we must

\* Collect.

join that spirit of self-renunciation and dependence upon God, which is the second condition of acceptable prayer. It is to such a state of mind that the services of the past Sundays have been gradually leading us. Having seen that God knows better than we do what is hurtful or profitable to us; having made the good things of His everlasting habitations, not those of this world, our portion,\* we shall now desire His will rather than our own,—we shall ask for the things that please Him, rather than those which please ourselves.† Thus the Christian's prayer, whatever it be, will, if offered up in this manner, be answered for our good. Even if temporal things should be its object, they will be granted only so far as God's good pleasure sees to be most profitable for us.

Spiritual gifts, however, are those which Christians most need, and which it is most pleasing to God that we should ask for. It is, therefore, "concerning spiritual gifts,"‡ that the epistle for this day instructs us. In this passage, St. Paul alludes to those miraculous gifts of the Spirit which were poured out upon the first preachers of the gospel. But what is said of them, may be applicable also to us. That one and the self-same Spirit Who once bestowed the gifts of miracles, and of healing, and of prophecy,|| still worketh in every baptized Christian, dividing to every one severally as He will.§ Upon each and all of us, according as we pray for them, does He bestow and increase His manifold gifts of grace. Let us, then, learn in that holy "House

\* Ninth Sunday after Trinity. † See Collect for the day. ‡ Epistle, verse 1; || verses 9, 10; § verse 11.

of Prayer,"\* of which the gospel speaks, both how to seek these gifts, and how to use them when we have obtained them. It is in the Lord's own house that Christ teaches His disciples how to pray. The prayers which are here put into our mouths, being all formed after the pattern of that given by our Lord Himself, are those by which Christians may learn both how to live and to pray. Here it is that we desire "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness;" and having obtained these precious gifts, here again we are taught to show our value for them in our lives as well as by our lips. By praying as we do for "*a daily* increase of them," that "we may be *daily* renewed" by them, we bind ourselves daily to use them to God's glory in that station which He has called upon us to fill. Such are the prayers to which God's merciful ears are ever open,† and to which a blessing is attached. It is only when our prayers and wishes are contrary to God's will, that they draw down upon us a curse, and not a blessing. This was Ahab's case. He eagerly desired that which it was not lawful for him to have. He wished for those things which were not pleasing to God.‡ His wishes were granted; and, when granted, turned to the destruction of himself and his posterity.|| Again, when Ahab sought guidance from the Word of the Lord, it was not in the spirit of submission that he did so.§ It was only according as the answer agreed with his own wishes, that he intended to follow

\* Epistle, versé 46. † Collect. ‡ Morn. Lesson;  
|| verses 21, 22. § Even. Less. verse 9.

it. He preferred the smooth things spoken by the prophets of Baal to the wholesome truths proceeding from the Word of the Lord. Thus he reminds us of those who pray to know their duty and then neglect to do it. Even the good King Jehoshaphat, swayed by his example, fell into the sin of going up to Ramoth-gilead, contrary to the Word of the Lord ;\* and so they fell both, the one into danger, the other into destruction.†

Having thus been taught how to pray, and what are the conditions of acceptable prayer, the remainder of the services hold out to us encouragement in praying. In the lesson for this evening, the mysteries of heaven are in some degree disclosed, and we behold the Lord of Heaven sitting on His throne, with all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and on His left.‡ These, as ministering spirits, going forth as messengers of good and evil,—are ready to minister good for them who shall be heirs of salvation, and punishment to them who know not God. Then, from the sight of God in His glory, we turn to Him in His human nature, compassionating the infirmities of His people, and weeping over their sins. || He Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, sheds tears over those who would not take heed unto the things which belonged unto their peace. From them, therefore, may we take warning. With us still it is the accepted time,—still with us it is the day of salvation. God, even now, looks down from His throne in heaven to see if there are any that will

\* Even. Less. verse 29 ;

† see verses 32 and 37 ;

‡ verse 19, &c.

|| Gospel, verses 42, 43.

understand and seek after God. If, then, we seek Him now in this our day, desiring the things which belong to our eternal peace, His eye will be upon us, and His ear ever open to our prayers. The sacrifice of our humble and devout prayers will ascend up with the incense upon the golden altar which is before the throne. (Rev. viii. 3.) So shall He hear our voice out of His holy temple, and our complaint shall come before Him, it shall enter even into His ears. The Lord will hear our petition, — the Lord will receive our prayer. (Psalm vi. 9.)

### Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 Cor. xv. 1.      *Morning Lesson*, 2 Kings, v.  
*Gospel*. St. Luke, xviii. 9.      *Evening Lesson*, 2 Kings, ix.

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LAST Sunday the Church taught us how to pray, and what to pray for. She bade us seek God's manifold gifts of grace in preference to all other benefits. To-day she would lead us on to see the result of our petitions. She would show us how the precious gift of God's grace, sought and obtained by prayer, is to show itself in our lives ; how it is to guide and govern us here, so as to secure for us an eternal treasure hereafter.

The collect again leads us to God's throne of grace ; and in doing so provides us with such words as will most effectually encourage us to approach the Majesty of God. The thought of God upon His glorious throne, exercising His Almighty power, might so overwhelm us with awe as to take away our powers of utterance, were we not reminded at the opening of this prayer, that He "most chiefly declareth it in showing mercy and pity ;"\* therefore we "may come boldly to the throne of grace, knowing that we shall find mercy and grace to help us in the time of need." But the collect

\* Collect.

goes on to teach us how to improve the gift of God's grace, when bestowed. Like the gift of bodily strength or any other precious talent, it will profit us only in proportion to our use of it. God sets before us a "heavenly treasure," promising it to us as His free gift. He points to the way of His commandments, as the road by which we may attain to it. When we ask it of Him, He gives us just such a measure of His grace as will keep us in this way : but then it must depend upon us whether we will "run" in it or no. His grace will not force us into it without our own endeavours, any more than bodily strength would force us to run, while our feet refused to make a step. When, therefore, we have offered up this prayer, we must be so much the more diligent in running the way of God's commandments. We must strive to work out our salvation in that particular path in which His Providence has placed us, trusting that He will supply us with such a measure of His grace as is necessary for the duties which specially belong to it. Thus our very dependance upon God's grace will increase rather than slacken our exertions ; for "knowing the excellency of the gift that is in us," we shall use our utmost endeavours to improve it, lest we should have received it in vain. Thus it is, that the power to will and to do what is right is God's free gift, while upon us it depends whether we fulfil the same.

Of this great truth St. Paul everywhere labours to convince us, but more especially does he teach it in the epistle for this day. In the first part of this passage, he leads us to the blessed atonement of Jesus Christ, as the only

cause of our salvation.\* He declares unto us how that Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification; thus bestowing upon us the free gift of the "gospel of the grace of God." (Acts, xx. 24.) Then from his own example the apostle goes on to teach us how this mighty gift is to work in us. He ever kept in remembrance the sense of his past transgression, even though it had been committed in ignorance.† He "laboured more abundantly than they all;"‡ yet he ascribed everything to the "grace of God which was in him." So must we, like him, repent, and run, and strive, while at the same time we ascribe all to the mighty power of a risen and crucified Saviour.

Thus we see how salvation, which is God's free gift, is given only in proportion as we use the means which lead to it. This is further illustrated by the history of Naaman read to us in this morning's lesson. The manner in which God cured him of his leprosy, is a striking emblem of the manner in which God cures us of our sins. To us, as to him, the Almighty dispenses the wonders of His healing grace, through means which, to all human appearance, would be unlikely to accomplish their end. Naaman knew not how the waters of Jordan were to convey healing to his body,|| any more than we know how the waters of Baptism, or the sacred elements of the Holy Communion convey healing to our souls. Yet, as in the one case, so is it also in the other. So long as Naaman refused to observe God's

\* Epistle, verses 1-5; † verse 9; ‡ verse 10.

|| See Morn. Less. verse 12.



conditions, he remained a leper; so long as we refuse or neglect the means of salvation, we must remain in our sins. Though the cure was God's work, not his, yet it was only when Naaman performed the conditions of faith and obedience which God required of him, that he obtained it. Then it was that "his flesh came again to him as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."\* Thus also it is with us. Only when we use the means which God has prescribed, then by the free gift of God, we are released from our sins; and being made strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, are enabled to run in the way which leads to everlasting life.†

But that we may feel more strongly the blessing of living in a state of grace or salvation, the evening lesson sets before us, as in contrast, the miserable end of those who depart out of God's strait and narrow way. By relating to us the fearful consequences of Ahab's crime,‡ the Church would remind us that though God is a God of grace and mercy, yet He is a God of judgment too; that though He willeth not that any should perish, yet He will in no wise spare the guilty; and thus would she urge us by warning, as well as by precept and example, not to turn aside, to the right hand or to the left, out of the path in which God would have us run.

Having thus been fully taught that our sufficiency lies not in ourselves, but in the grace of God, we shall turn with greater profit to the instruction provided for us in the gospel for the

\* Morn. Less. verse 14. † Collect.

‡ See Even. Less. verses 9, 27, 37.

day. Feeling that "in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing," we shall be ready like the publican, to smite upon our breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"\* Even while with the Pharisee, we fast, and give alms, and pray;† while, even in our smallest actions, we are striving to obey God's commandments, we shall remember with St. Paul that these things are wrought in us by the grace of God;‡ we shall acknowledge ourselves to be but unprofitable servants, saying, as he did, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me." In this spirit we may look for such a measure of God's grace, as will lead us on through the paths of His commandments, towards the attainment of His heavenly treasure.

\* Gospel, verse 13; † verses 11, 12.

‡ Epistle, verse 10.

## Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 2 Cor. iii. 4. *Morning Lesson*, 2 Kings, x.  
*Gospel*, St. Mark, vii. 31. *Evening Lesson*, 2 Kings, xviii.

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DURING the last two Sundays we have been dwelling on the proofs of God's love towards us. We have looked upon Him as a God of mercy, answering our prayers,\* and strengthening us with His grace.† Now we have to learn how sinners, such as we are, come to be admitted to such glorious privileges; and it is this which the Church would unfold to us in the epistle for this day. By setting before us as in contrast, the advantages of the new dispensation over the old‡ she would teach us to ascribe all these benefits to our participation in the gospel covenant.

The language of the apostle, in this passage, is therefore intended to show us in what these advantages consist. To do this more clearly, he refers us at once to the mysterious circumstance under which Moses received the Tables of the Law. When Moses came down from the Mount, the brightness that illuminated him was such, that the children of Israel could not behold the glory of his countenance.¶ He was

\* See Tenth Sunday after Trinity. † See Eleventh Sunday after Trinity. ‡ See Epistle; ¶ verse 7.

obliged to put a veil over his face that they might be able to bear it. Under this miraculous brightness may be represented to us, as in a type, the light of the glorious gospel of God gleaming through the ordinances of the law. This light, if displayed to them all at once, would have been as overpowering to their souls as the glory of Moses' face was to their bodily senses. God therefore ordained that they should be gradually prepared for it by means of an inferior covenant. He gave them a law which was to bring them to a knowledge of sin, and point out to them the way of obedience. He gave them types, and ordinances, and ceremonies, under which were prefigured and foreshadowed the great atonement of the promised Redeemer. Thus the people of God, under the first covenant, walked as beneath a veil. They were to obey the law according to "the letter," for they knew not "the spirit" which was veiled under it.\* They had to dread the "ministration of condemnation" which it brought with it, for they knew not yet of the ministration of righteousness and mercy to which it was to give place.† If then, from such a covenant as this there could shine out dim rays of future glory, what shall be the glory of that second covenant wherein the "veil is done away in Christ?"‡

Under this better dispensation it is our privilege to live. "God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," (2 Cor. iv. 6.) The glory of God, which they

\* Epistle, verse 6; † verse 9; ‡ verse 14.

saw but through a veil, we behold with open face as in a glass, (2 Cor. iii. 18.) The law, which they were to obey blindly, as servants, under pain of death, we, as sons, obey in the spirit of gratitude and love. The hope of redemption, which they saw but through sacrifices and types, we have seen fulfilled in the cross of Christ. To illustrate this more fully we have but to look to the lives of those who served God under the old dispensation, and whose histories are especially brought before us at this time.

We find that according to the measure in which they acted up to the light received, so were these faint glimpses of the light to come vouchsafed, or withheld. Jehu only served God according to the letter, without any spirit of love or devotion;\* and so he met with a proportionate reward. He became an instrument in God's hands to serve the Divine purpose, and gained for himself an earthly crown.† But he went no further. He had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. He was zealous in destroying the enemies of the Lord, while he left the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan.‡ Thus he affords a warning to those who, even under the Gospel Dispensation, "make a fair show outwardly in the flesh," while perhaps they retain in their hearts those very sins which are most hateful to God. But in the history of Hezekiah, which we begin this evening, we behold throughout an example of one who, even under the old dispensation, walked by faith, and not by sight.¶ He walked

\* See Morn. Less. verses 16-18; † verse 30;  
‡ verse 29. ¶ Even. Less. verses 6, 7.

with God, and called upon him in all his various trials and difficulties ; repented when he fell, and praised God when he was raised up, (see 2 Chron. xxxii. 20 — 25 ; Isa. xxxviii. 20 :) and so God vouchsafed him a more sensible manifestation of His presence. He was with him, in every circumstance of his life, to hear and answer his prayers, (see 2 Kings, xix. 20 ; see also, Isa. xxviii. 5.) He gave him hope and comfort in his sickness, and finally restored him to health. Such then, were the privileges of one who lived only according to the "letter" of the law. But the happiness of those who live according to its spirit, is far greater. Our eyes have been opened to behold the wondrous things which prophets and kings desired to see, but could not see them ; and our ears to hear the wondrous things which they desired to hear, but could not hear them. (St. Luke, x. 23.) When Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, came to fulfil in His own person the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, He brought healing to the souls, as He did to the bodies of his faithful servants. He Who, in the gospel for this day, made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak,\* opened our ears to hear the wondrous things of His law, and our lips to show forth his praise. "Having abolished, in His flesh, the law of commandments contained in ordinances," (Eph. ii. 15,) "we have access through Him by one spirit unto the Father," (verse 18.) This "grace wherein we stand," (Eph. v. 2,) is that which enables us to draw near with the confidence which is expressed in the collect for the day. Though we

\* Verse 35.

are so slothful and imperfect in our prayers, yet in the name of Him through Whom we pray, God will give us "more than either we desire or deserve." Though in striving to run the way of His commandments, we have "done many things which we ought not to have done, and left undone many things which we ought to have done," yet we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and for His sake, God will "forgive us those things whereof our conscience is afraid." Though we are not worthy of the very least of those mercies for which we pray, yet through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, God will bestow upon us such "good things"\* as eye hath not seen, or ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

\* See collect for the day.

### Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

*Epistle*, Gal. iii. 16.      *Morning Lesson*, 2 Kings, xix.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, x. 23.    *Evening Lesson*, 2 Kings, xxiii.

To prepare mankind for the blessings of the gospel covenant, has been the purpose of Almighty God ever since the fall of man. Last Sunday we traced this preparation in the law or covenant of Moses. To-day we go back still further, and find in God's covenant with Abraham, the sure promise of a Redeemer to come.\* This day's epistle shows the different positions of mankind under these distinct covenants; and then ascribes the blessings of each, and all, equally to the one Mediator between God and man, our Lord Jesus Christ.† It was by faith in Him, that Abraham was justified. Four hundred and thirty years before the time of Moses, or the giving of the law,‡ Abraham believed God; and it was counted unto him for righteousness. He possessed that justifying faith which shows itself by simple obedience to God's word, and reliance on His promises. From His example then, St. Paul teaches the Galatians, as the Church at this time shows us, that "mankind are justified by faith, without

\* Epistle, verse 18;    † See verses 20-22;  
                                          ‡ verse 17.



the works of the law,"\* (see also, Gal. ii. 16.) So it was in the time of Abraham. It was only when God's people mixed with idolators, and corruptions sprang up amongst them, that more minute and ceremonial observances were required to keep them in the right way. Then "the law was added because of transgressions."† Those who lived under this dispensation were therefore obliged to do the "works of the law," inasmuch as they were the paths by which God chose to "bring them to Christ."‡ They were the means by which He would keep alive amongst them the hope of an inheritance, and the promise of a Redeemer.

Thus were God's people justified *under*, but not *by*, the works of the law; for "by the works of the law can no flesh be justified," (Gal. ii. 16.) But when in the fulness of time, God sent forth the promised Seed, His own blessed Son, there was no more need for these ceremonial observances, and therefore no more obligation to observe them. The promises which Abraham saw afar off, which the Church of Israel discerned but darkly through types and ceremonies, were then brought nigh to us by the Blood of Christ. This is the figurative meaning of the parable read to us in the gospel for the day. Christ did for the poor fallen sons of Adam, what the good Samaritan in the parable did for the poor wounded man. We had fallen from the joys of Paradise to the troubles of a sinful world; from a state of holiness and safety, to one of danger and misery. Stripped and wounded|| by the power of the devil and

\* Epistle, verse 24; † verse 19; ‡ verse 24.

|| Verse 30.

his angels, we had sunk into the lowest depths of woe and wretchedness. From this state, none else but Christ could deliver us. The moral and ceremonial law, like the priest and Levite,\* only looked on from the other side. They were not sufficient to justify.

But what the law could not do, "in that it was weak through the flesh," (Rom. viii. 3,) it was left for Christ, the good Samaritan, to fulfil in us. He looked on us, and had compassion on us. He bound up the wounds of our sins, pouring thereupon His own precious Blood as wine to heal, and the influence of His Holy Spirit, as oil to restore and strengthen. But He did not leave us here. He took us into His Church, as into an inn or place of refuge where we might be kept in peace or safety.† With those appointed to serve in His Church, He has therefore left a Divine Commission to "take care of us" until He come again. Through their hands, He dispenses unto us the good things of His Church; and with them, He has left Holy Scriptures and Sacraments, to perfect the cure of our souls, and prepare us for His return.

Thus by the blessed covenant of grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, did "God in the fulness of time, gather together in one all things in Christ." (Eph. i. 10.) "Sending His own Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh;" but He did so, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." (Rom. viii. 3, 4.) This, then, brings us to the lesson which the Church would teach us in the collect for this

\* Gospel, verses 31, 32; † verse 34.

day. God, as we learn from this prayer, has brought His people into covenant with Him that they might do Him true and laudable service; that is, such service as He has promised graciously to accept, through the merits of our one only Mediator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. That such service was paid to God by His faithful servants under the old dispensation, Holy Scripture abundantly testifies; especially in those portions of it which we read to-day. Hezekiah's firm resistance of the enemies of God; his prayer and faith,\* and entire dependence upon God's almighty power, may well be an example to us, under the gospel covenant, who have to wrestle against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness and works of darkness. Josiah, whose history is read to us this evening, remembered his Creator in the days of his youth, (see 2 Kings, xxii. 19, 20,) and feared the Lord from his youth up. His whole life was spent in the service of God, in restoring His temple, and purifying His holy worship.† Therefore God, in His mercy, took him away from the evil to come. By an early death, He gathered him to his grave in peace, (see also, 2 Kings, xxii. 20,)‡ that his eyes might not see the evil which the Almighty would bring upon his place. These, then, both died in peace. Not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, they yet were persuaded of them, and embraced them. (Heb. xi. 13.)

But the true and laudable service which God requires of His faithful servants under the new

\* Morn. Less. verse 14, &c.; † Even. Less. verse 3, &c.

‡ verse 29.

dispensation, has been even more clearly defined by the Lord Himself, in the gospel for the day. Christians, as we here learn from His own lips, have no less a service to perform than to love the Lord their God with all their souls, and their neighbour as themselves.\* As the good Samaritan did to the poor traveller, — as Christ did to poor fallen man, — even so must we “go and do likewise.”† We must “love one another as God hath loved us;” and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven us. (Eph. iv. 32.)

Thus does the Church on this day show us how God of His own free mercy hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. She sets before us the blessed hopes and promises, which, though laid up in heaven before the foundation of the world, have been “manifest in these last days for us,” (1 St. Peter, i. 20, 21;) and she tells us “what we may do to inherit eternal life.”‡

\* Verse 27; † verse 37; ‡ verse 25.

## Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Gal. v. 16.

*Morning Lesson*, Jer. v.

*Gospel*, St. Luke, xvii. 11.

*Evening Lesson*, Jer. xxii.

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“A COVENANT,” means an agreement between two parties, in which promises on the one side must be met by obligations on the other. So it is with God’s covenant of grace and mercy in Christ Jesus. While it holds out promises, it also lays down commands. This is the truth which it is now the object of the Church to teach us. During the last two Sundays, she has been dwelling on God’s mercy towards us; His readiness to forgive, to hear our prayers, and give us all we pray for. Then she led us on still further, and told us of “the promise of faith in Jesus Christ,”\* and the sure hope of an inheritance to come. Then the tone changed; and, from promises on God’s part, she came to speak of service on ours.† Thus have we been prepared to learn, as we do this day, what are the conditions which the covenant lays on us, and how we are to observe them. The collect teaches us this by the three words of “Faith, Hope, and Charity;”‡ it shows us how these three Christian graces exercised

\* Epistle for Thirteenth Sunday, verse 22. † Collect and Gospel for Thirteenth Sunday. ‡ Collect.

here, are to be the means of obtaining God's promises hereafter. Faith makes us believe the promises; and Hope bids us in patience "wait for them." (Rom. viii. 25.) "Having been begotten again unto a lively hope by the abundant mercy of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and being kept by the power of faith unto salvation, we look forward to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." (1 St. Peter, i. 3, 4, 5.) Thus, by Faith and Hope, we realize the promises of God. We are persuaded of them, and embrace them; we look forward to them as something which we are to have and enjoy as our own. But to "obtain" them, we must go a step further. Faith and Hope lead us towards the enjoyment of God's promises, but they do not put us in possession of them. If we would "obtain that which God doth promise," "Charity" must be added to our "Faith and Hope;" the love of God's commands must go along with the desire of His promises.\* "Charity" here means the keeping of God's commandments; such a love of Him as will show itself by an entire devotion to His service. This blessed temper, then, unites all our obligations under the Christian covenant. In the collect, we pray for an increase of it; and the epistle teaches us how to exercise and cultivate it. This portion of Scripture being addressed by St. Paul to his newly-converted disciples, is chosen to instruct us who, at this time, are considering our obligations under the gospel covenant. It tells us how we, being led by the Spirit, and no longer under the law, are

\* Collect.

bound to "walk according to the Spirit, and not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh.\* To understand this expression, we must remember that in every regenerate Christian there is ever going on a mighty struggle between good and evil, sin and holiness,—between the love of God, Who redeemed us, and of the world we have renounced. This is what Holy Scripture here calls the "lusting of the flesh against the Spirit, and of the Spirit against the flesh." To overcome the one and follow the other, is the work which, as His children in Christ Jesus, God has given us to do. Each time we wilfully give way to a wrong thought, or temper, or inclination, we give advantage to the flesh, and fall further from the promises of God. When, on the contrary, we follow the guidance of the Spirit, then we grow in all those holy tempers which are said to be His "fruit," and advance, step by step, in our Christian course towards the attainment of God's heavenly promises.

These "fruits of the Spirit,"† then, are "the things which God commands;" they make up that temper of mind for which the collect prays under the name of "Charity;" and it is only by now studying and contemplating them until we are brought to love and practise them, that we can hope to "obtain that which God doth promise"‡ hereafter. Thus, from the collect and epistle for this day, taken with the services which precede, we have learned something of God's mercy to us, and of our duty to God. The gospel illustrates this lesson by example. Christ our Saviour has done for our

\* Epistle, verse 16; † verse 22. ‡ Collect.

souls, what He did for the bodies of these ten poor lepers.\* He has cured us of our spiritual leprosy, which is sin. By taking us into covenant with Himself, He has restored our fallen and degraded nature, and brought us back to a state of spiritual life and energy. But, as it was in the case of the lepers, so also is it in our own. Out of the ten who were cured of the loathsome disease, only one returned to give glory to God.† Out of the many whom Christ has restored by regeneration, how few turn back to glorify Him by walking in newness of life. Many of us whom God has taken into the second covenant, fall away as grievously as did those under the first covenant, of whom we read in the lessons for the day. To us, then, as well as to them, may be addressed the awful warnings contained in the words of Jeremiah. If we like them serve strange Gods,‡ walking after the flesh, and not after the Spirit;§ if we have a “revolting and rebellious heart,”§ God may visit and be avenged on us for these things.¶ If, after our eyes and ears have been opened to discern the wondrous things of Christ’s law, we neither see them, nor hear them,\*\* then may we fear lest God should “turn and withhold His good things from us,”†† If we reject Him, as did His people of old, He may also reject us, saying unto us as He did to them, “*Because ye have forsaken the covenant of the Lord,‡‡ and worshipped*

\* Gospel, verse 14;      † verse 15.

‡ Morn. Less. verses 7, 19; Even. Less. verse 9.

§ Epistle.      § Morn. Less. verse 23;      ¶ verse 9;

\*\* verse 21;      †† verse 25.      ‡‡ Even. Less. verse 9.



other Gods, and served them, therefore have I brought this evil upon you."

That we of the Christian covenant may be preserved from a like fall, let us profit by the lesson of the Church in the services of this day. While in them she tells us of the promises of God, she also reminds us that, "having these promises we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in His fear, (2 Cor. vii. 1 ;) while by faith and hope, she keeps our eyes fixed upon "that which God doth promise," she bids us cultivate the charity which "loves that which He doth command."\*

\* Collect.

## Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

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*Epistle*, Gal vi. 11.

*Gospel*, St. Matt. vi. 24.

*Morning Lesson*, Jer. xxxv.

*Evening Lesson*, Jer. xxxvi.

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THE promises of God, though offered alike to all, are applied to us individually in the Church of Christ. It is as members of Christ's Body the Church, that we venture to appropriate or take to ourselves the great and glorious privileges of the gospel covenant.

Having then been duly made to feel the value of these blessed privileges, now we look to the Church as the means or channel by which they are conveyed to us. We learn to love it and pray for it;\* we are bid to live and walk according to its rule.†

The epistle, taking the words of St. Paul to his Galatian converts, speaks of the happy change which passes upon all baptized Christians, at their admission into the Church of Christ. It shows us, how by our entrance into this holy society, we become partakers of the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," and are consequently released from the ceremonial observances of the law of Moses.‡ Of this, the cross which was then signed upon our foreheads, is a mark or token; for circumci-

\* Collect. † Epistle. ‡ See verses 14, 15.

sion, with all other Jewish rites and ceremonies, having once for all been done away in the Cross of Christ, those who bear this sign can be under no obligation to observe them. Being stamped and marked\* as members of Christ, they can never be required to undergo in their own persons, what Christ their Head has undergone for them. From henceforth then, we who have been baptized, glory in nothing but in the Cross of Christ. That alone is to be the sign of our faith, and the rule of our lives. Thus, having been freed from the law of Moses, we have to take upon us the lighter burden of the Cross of Christ. To understand this, we must remember that Christ's life in the flesh is a model of that which Christians live in the spirit. Our blessed Lord's death upon the Cross therefore represents to us something of the manner in which we are to mortify and kill all sin and wickedness in ourselves. The long and lingering death which our adorable Redeemer endured, pictures to us the long and hard struggle which must be endured before our corruptions are overcome; and in His quiet repose in the tomb, we find an assurance to those who persevere, that all their evil affections shall be finally buried in His grave.

Such is the struggle which is imposed upon us by the Cross of Christ, and such the victory we must obtain before we can say, with St. Paul, that "the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world."†

This great truth is further impressed upon us by the Church in the gospel and proper lessons for this day. The former teaches

\* Epistle, verse 17; † verse 14.

us in the very words of our crucified Redeemer, how we who are His followers must deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily. This is what each one of us may find constant opportunities of doing. All Christians, who have taken upon themselves this holy sign, bind themselves to live henceforth as soldiers of Christ. He is the Lord, Whom they have sworn to obey; the Master\* they have promised to serve. While, however, they are still militant here on earth, other lords will be struggling to get the dominion over them; mammon will try to usurp the place of Christ. By "mammon,"† we are here to understand anything which draws our affections away from God; any gratification, or indulgence, or affection which interferes with our duty to God. It may be but a very small thing, yet if not restrained, it may get the dominion over us, and so prove to us that dangerous "master" of which our Lord speaks. To resist this besetting temptation, whatever it may be, must then be our continual aim, even in our very childhood.

The struggle in which we are thus involved, may indeed impose upon us many difficulties, and self-denials, and many crosses; yet these will be but light and easy when we think of the Cross which our Redeemer has borne for us. The remembrance of our Saviour's sufferings, will make us ready to forego, when required, our own worldly ease and comfort, trusting all to Him, Who has done so much for us.‡

This, then, is the work which the Church

\* See Gospel, verse 24; † verse 24; ‡ verse 33.

gave us to do, when she “received us into the congregation of Christ’s flock, and signed us with the sign of the Cross. (Baptismal service.)

To train us to the performance of it, she has appointed certain rules and ordinances, to which, in the name of Christ, her Head, she commands our submission and obedience. How much God values such obedience, when it proceeds from a spirit of reverence and self-denial, we learn from the example of the Rechabites in this morning’s lesson. Out of simple respect to the commands of their father, this people abstained from the comforts and luxuries of the world around them.\* Their passive obedience and self-denying devotion met with its reward. God had respect unto it, and saved their tribe from the general punishment impending upon the neighbouring nations.† How different was the end of those who neglected the commands of the Heavenly Father, and hearkened not unto His words. Of them, we read in the evening lesson, that God punished them and their seed for their iniquity. He brought upon them all the evil that He had pronounced against them.‡ From these examples, then, we learn, that however blessed and privileged as a body any Church or nation may be, the individuals who compose it may influence its safety or its fall. So it is also in our own case. God has planted amongst us a holy Church, in which to apply to us promises of mercy, and supply us with rules of conduct; yet, so long as it is made up of human members, their frailty may provoke Almighty God

\* Morn. Less. verse 6, &c.; † verse 19.

‡ Even. Less. verse 31.

to withdraw His "candlestick" from us. Let us, then, all see that we do our part towards the preservation of so great a blessing. What this part is, this day's services may teach us. First, we must pray in the words of the collect, that God would keep His Church with His perpetual mercy, and not suffer it to fall through the frailty of weak members; for so only can we hope to be preserved from all hurtful things, and led on unto those things which are profitable to our salvation. Then, remembering the solemn vow which was laid upon us at our entrance into this holy Church, we must cheerfully deny ourselves to take up our Cross, and follow Christ.\* This is "the promise" which all Christ's members have bound themselves to keep, and to as many as perform it, "God, on His part, will most surely perform His." (Baptismal Service.) This is "the rule" by which they must walk; and to as many as walk according to it, peace shall be on them, and not on them only, but on the whole Israel, or Church of God.†

\* Epistle and Gospel.

† Epistle, verse 16.

## Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Eph. iii. 13.      *Morning Lesson*, Ezek. ii.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, vii. 11.      *Evening Lesson*, Ezek. xiii.

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THE welfare of the Church is influenced by the prayers, as well as by the lives, of each of its individual members.\* The members of Christ, as one great family, are taught to "pray one for another," (St. James, v. 16;) the people pleading for the ministers,—the ministers interceding for the sins of the people. This is a time when we are especially called upon to fulfil this duty. At this season, when the Church is about to increase her number of ministers, our prayers are more particularly required to implore the blessing of God upon the whole Church, and those whom He ordains to serve in it. It is to train us to the performance of this duty, that the services both for to-day and the preceding Sunday speak to us of the Church of Christ, and of the benefits we enjoy therein; for by thus making us feel the value of the blessings she conveys to us, the Church would more effectually and earnestly demand our prayers.

The Church is the family of God. Those who compose it, whether already triumphant

\* See Epistle.

in heaven, or still militant on earth,\* have been made His children by adoption and grace. They are, therefore, admitted to a participation of those blessings which form the subject of St. Paul's prayer for his Ephesian converts. The Spirit of God, by Whom they are regenerated, dwells in them. They become His temple; and so by Him are "strengthened with might"† in their soul or "inner man." By the same blessed Spirit, the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts. Christ, therefore, dwells in their hearts by faith;‡ according to His own promise to those that love Him, that "He will come unto them, and make His abode with them." (St. John, xiv. 13.) So great, then, is the change which passes upon all regenerate Christians at their entrance into the Church of Christ, that it can be compared to nothing less than a resurrection. By it we become "dead unto sin, and born again unto righteousness." The "old Adam is buried in us, and the new man is raised up in us." To illustrate more fully this great truth, the Church leads us to consider the resurrection of the widow's son in the gospel for the day. In this, as in the other miracles performed by our Lord upon the bodies of men, we may see a type of those which He now works upon our souls. Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, Who stood by the bier of the young man, to bid him "arise,"|| is as really, though invisibly, present with each one of His regenerate members, when He bids them "rise again from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness." (Baptismal service.) The

\* Epistle, verse 15; † verse 16; ‡ verse 17.

|| Gospel, verse 14.



influence of His blessed Spirit, which He then sheds upon their souls, is to them as the breath of their spiritual life, by which they live, and move, and have their being. The same mighty Power which raised the widow's son from temporal death, also "quickened us when we were dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians, ii. 5.)

But the members of Christ who partake of this spiritual resurrection, have been so raised in order that they may walk in newness of life. Having received, through grace, that "precious thing," which by nature they could not have, they must watch and keep the heavenly gift, lest by their own carnal will and frailty they should defile it. This is the object of the collect which we use this day. From this prayer we learn that without God's help and succour, neither the Church which He hath purchased with His own blood, nor the members who compose it, can "continue in safety ;" therefore we must implore for it God's continual pity and goodness. We must pray for all its members, that having received its Holy Spirit, the influence of that Spirit may make clean their hearts within them, and so the whole body be continually cleansed and defended. Having then used this prayer, we must act up to its teaching, by striving to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to purify ourselves as Christ, our Head, is pure. Thus may each individual member, by his own care and watchfulness, conduce to the general purity of that holy society of which he forms a part, while at the same time he obtains for himself

\* Collect.

an increase of those blessings described in the epistle for the day. The Holy Ghost daily renewing and strengthening him, will teach him "those things which no man knoweth but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11.) It will make him understand what is the length, and breadth, and height, of the love of Christ, and so lead him on from grace to grace, until he is filled with all the fulness of God.\*

Such is the blessed state of grace and salvation to which God calls us in the Church of Christ. In admitting us into it, however, God works by human means — He makes use of human instruments. By the Divine Commission once given to His holy apostles, He appoints in His Church pastors and teachers, and through the grace given unto them He chooses to bestow His manifold gifts and blessings. These, having specially "received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, for the work and office of the ministry," go forth, as did the prophet of old in the strength of that same Spirit,† to speak to "a rebellious and gainsaying people." Upon them, therefore, is laid the same arduous work, and labour, and responsibility. They have to speak the word in season and out of season, — rebuking, reproofing, exhorting, whether we will hear or whether we will forbear.‡ To them is committed the precious "roll" of God's Holy Word, out of which they speak comfort to the penitent; lamentation, and mourning, and woe, to such as continue in their sins.¶ To them also is intrusted the charge of those holy Sacraments, which are as the saviour of life to them

\* Epistle, verses 18, 19.

† Morn. Less. verse 2;   ‡ verse 7;   ¶ verse 10.

who receive them worthily, and of death to such as receive them unworthily.

But while in the morning lesson we thus learn something of the heavy cares devolving upon the messengers of God, that for the evening makes us feel more strongly the weight of their charge, by setting forth God's threatenings against those who are unfaithful to their trust. It speaks of God's vengeance against those false teachers, who prophesy out of their own hearts instead of from the Word of the Lord;\* who speak smooth things, and prophesy deceits, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.†

Seeing, then, how heavy is the responsibility of those who watch for our souls, and how great the benefits we receive at their hands, surely we shall gladly avail ourselves of the most effectual means by which we can assist them. We shall be ready to join our prayers to the many which about this time are to be offered up, that God would grant to His ministers such a measure of His grace, and so endue them with innocency of life, that "they may faithfully serve before Him to the glory of His great Name, and the benefit of His holy Church." (Collect for Ember week.)

From the services of this season, then, we learn how all, in their different stations, may contribute to the cleansing and purifying of the Church of Christ. We are taught how ministers and people, each in their relative positions, may, "throughout all ages," promote the great work of "ascribing glory to God in the Church by Christ Jesus."‡

\* Even. Less. verse 2; † verse 16.

‡ Epistle, verse 21.

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

*Epistle*, Eph. iv. 1.      *Morning Lesson*, Ezek. xiv.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, xiv. 1.      *Evening Lesson*, Ezek. xviii.

HAVING seen what is our high and holy calling in the Church of Christ, we must now take heed that we "walk worthy of it." We must "go on unto perfection," growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the lesson which may be learned from the services selected for this day. The collect prays for the continual guidance of God's heavenly grace; the epistle and gospel inculcate the practice of those divine virtues which are its first fruits; while the lessons warn us against the danger of misusing this most precious of God's good gifts.

It is from the Holy Spirit of God that the whole Church of Christ derives its spiritual life and energy. The Holy Spirit is to the body and members of Christ's Church, what the soul is to the body and limbs of a man. This figure, so often used in Holy Scripture, is especially dwelt upon by St. Paul in the epistle for this day. By it, he would teach to the newly converted members their duty in the Church of Christ, and with this view it is now brought forward for our own instruction. We

learn then from this passage that we, who have been baptized by one Spirit into one body have one common hope, one common calling. One God is our Father, and the same Lord is our one and only Master.\* The same Spirit Which dwells in the whole body of Christ, and gives life to all its ordinances, also lives and acts in each one of its members separately. Just as one soul controuls and regulates the movements of our body, and makes our limbs to act in unison and harmony — so also does the Holy Spirit of God to the body and members of Christ. It binds them together, making them to will and to do those things which belong to their proper place, and keeping them all in unity, peace, and concord. It follows then from this, that if we would “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,”† we must each seek for ourselves an increase of this blessed Spirit, and then follow as It guides. The grace of God, thus “preventing” or going before us, will put into our hearts good thoughts and intentions, and these, followed up and strengthened by the same holy influence, will be carried out in the continual practice of good works. Thus may we each and all be led to the exercise of those holy tempers which are laid down in the epistle as the fruits of God’s preventing grace.‡ The thought that our fellow members are sharers with us in the grace of God will bind us to them in the holiest ties of Christian love. Remembering that they may perhaps be even more the “temples of the Holy Ghost” than ourselves, we shall be afraid of judging them harshly or uncharitably, but shall rather behave

\* Epistle, verses 4–8; † verse 1; ‡ verse 2.

ourselves towards them with forbearance and long-suffering. Fearing to break the unity of Christ's body, and so grieve His Holy Spirit,\* we shall strive with "lowliness and meekness" to fulfil the duties of our station as He points them out. Thus may each member, however humble his position, do his part towards keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; and so will the whole body, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, make increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. iv. 16.) The epistle, having thus supplied us with motives and rules of action, the gospel carries out these precepts by example. From the pattern and teaching of our Blessed Lord Himself, we are here taught to look upon forbearance, humility, and mercy, as amongst the first and highest duties of our Christian calling.

By an act of mercy, our Lord silences His bitterest enemies.† While they watch to find an accusation against Him, He cures the sick man of his dropsy. While they seek to condemn Him out of the law, He by this very act justifies His observance of it; for they knew as He did, that the law allowed acts of mercy and kindness on the Sabbath-day.‡

Thus did our Lord silence disputes and reprove gainsayers; and thus may His members learn from His example. While men cavil about the laws of God and His Church, Christians must act rather than dispute. While others would entangle themselves in points of law and doctrine which are too hard for them,

\* Epistle, verse 3. † Gospel, verse 4; ‡ verses 5, 6.

Christians must strive to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, in forbearance, humility, and meekness.\* Thus will they be bearing testimony to the truth of God's holy religion and ordinances, while they neither disturb the unity of the spirit, nor break the bond of peace. The duty of Christian meekness and humility is again more strongly inculcated by the parable with which this portion of Scripture concludes. From this passage we Christians may learn to fill each our proper place, to walk each in our appointed station. The Feast to which we are called is the marriage-supper of the Lamb, the kingdom of grace upon earth, and the kingdom of glory in heaven. If, therefore, we now take in it the place which God has called upon us to fill, serving God, not ourselves; seeking God's glory, not our own; we may hope that He will bid us "go up higher,"† even unto the mansions which He has prepared for us in heaven. Thus our very lowliness and self-renunciation will cause us to be exalted in the presence of Him by Whom we have been bidden. Such, then, are the blessed effects of God's grace upon those who receive it rightly. Very different is it with such as abuse their privileges and sin on against light and knowledge. Of this we have a fearful warning in the lessons which we read this day. The people, on whom, by the mouth of His prophet Ezekiel, God utters such fearful judgments, were those to whom He had formerly "given a new heart," on whom He had formerly poured "a new spirit," (Ezekiel, xi. 19,) yet they fell. Setting up idols and

\* Epistle, verses 1, 2.      † Gospel, verse 10.

stumbling-blocks in their hearts, they were led astray from their high privileges, and so provoked God to pronounce against them the awful threatening expressed in this chapter. Herein He declares to those who "turn aside from the ways of righteousness to walk in the ways of wickedness, that in the iniquity which they have committed, and in the sin which they have sinned, in them shall they die."\*

So may it also be with us. If we, who have been once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, turn aside from the holy commandment which has been delivered to us; then our latter end may be worse than the beginning. Unless we repent and "turn ourselves from our transgressions,"† we may provoke God to cast us away from His presence, and take His Holy Spirit from us. With this warning then before our eyes, let us see that we profit by it, and learn the lesson which the Church would teach us this day. We also have had a new heart, and a new spirit has been put within us. We have been made "temples of the Holy Ghost" and "partakers of the heavenly calling." Let us then take heed that we fall not away by grieving and vexing His Holy Spirit. Praying to God that He would "prevent" and defend us by His heavenly grace, let us strive so to walk worthy of our vocation here, that, increasing in His Holy Spirit more and more, we may come to His everlasting kingdom hereafter.

\* Even. Less. verse 24; † verse 30.



## Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, 1 Cor. i. 4.

*Morning Lesson*, Ezek. xx.

*Gospel*, St. Matt. xxii. 34. *Evening Lesson*, Ezek. xxiv.

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THE members of Christ have enemies to contend against, as well as blessings to receive. As they share the common gifts, so also they share the common dangers and difficulties of the body to which they belong. To resist these dangers and fight against these difficulties is then a part of our Christian calling or vocation; and it is to this that the services of this day turn our thoughts.

To-day we learn how we who have "received the fulness of God's grace,"\* (see also Baptismal Service,) go out in the strength of that grace, to fight "under Christ's banner, against the world, the flesh, and the devil."†

From these words then, which the Church pronounces over every one of her regenerate members, we see that the foes we have to fight against are not imaginary; they are real and powerful though invisible, and because invisible all the more dangerous.

But to be able to withstand our enemies we must know something of them, and find out

\* See Services for last Sunday.

† See Services for this day.

how they attack us. By "the world,"\* we mean anything which entices or draws us away from the service of God. Its temptations may vary according to our different ages, circumstances and characters; but every one who serves God in His Church militant on earth is in some way or other subject to the evil influence of "the world" in which he lives. Upon some it works through ambition or the desire to be great amongst our fellow men; upon others through covetousness or the love of riches. Sometimes it tempts us in the form of worldly ease or pleasure; but if through our particular circumstances or station it cannot tempt us through these outward things, then it sometimes penetrates into the secret corners of our hearts. It corrupts our motives, and turns even our best actions into snares and occasions of falling. It tempts us to seek our own glory, not God's honour,—to look to the praise of men rather than the praise of God. We see then, that as long as we are in the world, we cannot altogether withdraw ourselves from its influence. Old and young, rich and poor, all are in some degree open to its temptations; therefore we pray to God, not that He would take us out of it, but that He would "keep us from the evil of it." (St. John, xvii. 15.) But while the world thus attacks us from without, we find in "the flesh"\* a no less dangerous enemy within. The temptations of the flesh are those which proceed from the evil of our own hearts. Bad thoughts and tempers, evil passions, and desires, and inclinations,—these spring up even in the very youngest and sim-

\* Collect.

plest of Christ's members to turn them out of the right way, and they must be resisted by the grace of God, by watching and prayer.

But it is from "the devil,"\* the chief and most formidable of all our spiritual enemies, that the temptations of the world and of the flesh derive their power. They are the instruments by which he works, the servants which he employs to "hunt the souls of men." He finds out the point in which they may most easily beset us, and then he watches every opportunity to catch us in their snares. Such are some of the dangers to which God's people now are subject, and against which we this day pray. Now that we are no longer in danger of falling down before blocks of wood and stone to worship them, the world and the flesh are the idols by which the devil tempts us away from following the "only God." Thus we find in the lessons of this day, that the words spoken by God to His people Israel by the mouth of His prophet Ezekiel may be applicable to ourselves.

When God chose Israel and brought them forth out of Egypt to lead them into "the land which is the glory of all lands,"† He demanded of them that they should "every one cast away the abominations of their eyes and not defile themselves with the idols of Egypt" from which they had been redeemed. Then He pleaded with them in the wilderness, giving them statutes and ordinances for their guidance and direction. He "purged out from among them" the "rebels"‡ who were not to be permitted to enter with them into the Land of Promise.

\* Collect. † Morn. Less. verse 6; ‡ verse 38.

So did He also deal with us. When He called us forth out of the Egypt of this world to lead us to "the land of everlasting life," (Baptismal Service,) then He required of us that we should cast away or renounce "the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh;" for these are the "abominations" of our own hearts, the idols which belong to the Egypt of this world which we have renounced. Now also He pleads with us in the wilderness, purging out from among us by discipline and chastening those rebellious thoughts and passions which can find no entrance with us into the heavenly Canaan.

But if our state of warfare and trial is parallel with theirs, so may our end be too. This it is which the evening lesson brings before us by warning and example. In this chapter the destruction of their nation and the fall of their Church are represented to the Jewish nation in a figure,—the parable of the boiling pot\* being an emblem of the one,—the death of the prophet's wife a type of the other.† The destruction of Jerusalem, however, is but a very faint type of the destruction which will overtake the careless and impenitent amongst ourselves at the last day. If at that day we are found overcharged with the cares of this life, making to ourselves idols of them in our hearts, then may we fear, as our Saviour has warned us, lest we should not be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.

It follows then from this, that for Christians to dwell in safety they must worship the one

\* Even. Less. verse 4, &c.; † verse 18.

only true God, and Him only must they serve. This is the prayer which we make in the collect, as it is also the lesson which our Lord Himself teaches us in the gospel for the day. Rightly to carry out this principle, even our very smallest actions, whether they concern ourselves, our neighbours, or mankind in general, must be performed with a regard to God's glory and a desire to do His pleasure. This is the first commandment in the law, and with no other service will God be satisfied.\* Thus it is that we may best bear testimony to our divine Lord and Master. Instead of doubting and questioning as the Pharisees did about the Divinity of our Blessed Redeemer, we shall prove that Christ is our Lord by doing the things which He says.

Seeing then the difficulties and dangers which now surround the people of God, we shall read with thankfulness, in the epistle, of the safeguards which are provided for us in our Christian calling. This passage is particularly applicable to the Christian Church at this time. This being the last day on which it is possible that the ordination Sunday may fall, it is chosen with an especial reference to the ministers of Christ, and to the people committed to their charge. To the one it speaks of the gifts which they convey; to the others of the benefits received through their means. In it we may all unite to "thank God for the grace which is given us by Jesus Christ."† We may all bless Him that He has given us such a measure of His gifts as will meet the particular necessities and dangers of the office or station to which we

\* Gospel, verse 38.      † Epistle, verse 4.

are called ;\* and we may all join in the hope that, if we use them rightly, He will “confirm us unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”†

Thus in the services for this day, we see what our dangers are, and how they are to be withstood. We learn to watch and pray against them, while at the same time we trust for success only to the “grace which is given us by Jesus Christ.” Thus armed, the “enemy shall not be able to do us violence, the son of wickedness shall not hurt us.” Christ Himself, at the very time when He bade us go forth to fight against the enemies of our salvation, also gave us “power to have victory and to triumph over the devil, the world, and the flesh.” (Baptismal service.)

\* Epistle, verse 5 ;      † verse 8.

## Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Eph. iv. 17.  
*Gospel*, St. Matt. ix. 1.

*Morning Lesson*, Daniel, iii. \*  
*Evening Lesson*, Daniel, vi.

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IF we have been striving to carry out the lessons which last Sunday's services taught us, we shall be prepared to join in the collect provided for this day. Our struggles against sin will have discovered to us our own weakness, and brought us to acknowledge that "without God we are not able to please Him."\* To His Holy Spirit, then, we are this day taught to look for comfort, aid, and spiritual guidance. We learn how, when weak in ourselves, we are yet strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. This truth may in some degree be gathered from the miracle which is recorded in the gospel for the day. In the state of the man sick of the palsy, we see as in a type, the state of our souls, when unrenewed by the Spirit of God.

The poor paralytic of whom we here read was utterly helpless and unable to move. Until his friends brought him to receive strength at the hands of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he could not even use means for his own recovery.† So it is with man unassisted

\* Collect. † Verse 2.

by divine grace. Until he is brought to Christ to receive the strengthening influence of the Blessed Comforter, he must remain in the state of spiritual inactivity and deadness which is described in the epistle for the day.

Living as an alien or stranger from the life of God, through the ignorance and blindness that is in him,\* his spiritual energies are paralyzed or deadened; and so, he continues in sin, working all manner of evil and wickedness.† Such is the miserable state of those, who have never received the Holy Spirit, or who, after having received, grieve and reject Him.‡ But if our spiritual sickness is thus represented by the condition of this poor paralytic, so is our cure also. Christ, our Lord, first employs His almighty power to forgive the sick man, and then, by giving him strength to arise and walk,|| He proves to the gainsaying multitude His divine authority to forgive sins, and therefore the reality of their forgiveness.

So does He also in our own case. First, He removes the cause of our helplessness, which is sin; and then He enables us to show that we are indeed released from it, by the power which He gives us to walk in newness of life. This is the truth which is brought before us by St. Paul in this day's epistle. This passage contrasts our helplessness as aliens and strangers from God,§ with the strength which we received with the "seal"¶ or token of God's Holy Spirit. It points out the difference between the old man and the new,—between those who have "learned Christ," and those who know Him

\* Epistle, verse 18; † verse 19; ‡ verse 30.

|| Gospel, verse 6. § Epistle, verses 17-20;

¶ verse 30.



not.\* By these marks, then, we must search and try ourselves, if we would know whether we follow or whether we reject the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. Lying belongs to our old or corrupt nature. It is one of the works of the devil, for "he is a liar, and the father of lies;" and it must be put away by those who have been enlightened and renewed by the Spirit of truth. When, therefore, we are betrayed into deceit or hypocrisy, or any kind of double dealing, then we may know that we are not acting under the direction of God's Holy Spirit,—we are falling from a state of grace back again into a state of wrath. And as with lying, so also is it with other sins, such as anger,† theft,‡ or evil speaking.§ The temptation to fall into them comes from the evil of our own hearts,—the power to resist them from the Holy Spirit of God. When, therefore, we wilfully yield to them, we incur, independently of the sins which we commit, the awful danger of "grieving the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption."§ This, then, is the ground on which St. Paul urges us to be so diligent in resisting the very first beginnings of sin in our hearts; and this is what we have to remember when we are tempted to do any one of those sins of which He speaks.

The fear of resisting or grieving this Blessed Spirit will make us ever careful to follow His holy guidance, and so His influence will enable us even from our earliest years to overcome the evil of our nature. Thus, though we may feel angry, yet, if we resist the wrong thought, the

\* Epistle, verses 20-32; † verse 26; ‡ verse 28;  
 § verse 29; § verse 30.

grace of God within us will help us to put away bitterness and wrath, and to "sin not."\* Though we may be tempted to use idle, or wicked, or uncharitable words, yet if we endeavour to controul our tongues, the Holy Spirit of God will put into our mouths that which is good to the use of edifying.† We see then, that though without God we are unable to please Him, yet with the help of the Holy Spirit to rule and direct our hearts in all things, we shall be enabled to do His will. This divine truth is strongly illustrated in the lives of those holy men of whom we read this day. The temptations and trials under which they laboured were such as could not have been resisted by flesh and blood, yet they overcame them in the strength of the Lord and in the power of His might. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego withstood the impious order of the wicked king Nebuchadnezzar, even in the face of death itself.‡

They resisted, not in their own strength, but in the strength of that God Who they knew was able to deliver them from the burning fiery furnace,|| and so they were preserved. God Himself was with them, and brought them safely through its flames, so that "not a hair of their head was singed, neither did the smell of fire pass on them."§ So will God also be with us. If only like them we follow His guidance, the Spirit of the Lord will keep us in the fiery trials of this present world, so that no harm shall come to us, nor the breath of its evil influence be suffered to hurt us. Thus also

\* Epistle, verse 26; † verse 29.

‡ Morn. Less. verse 13; || verse 17; § verse 27.

may we apply the history of Daniel which we read in the evening. Daniel was a man of like passions with ourselves, yet he triumphed over dangers and difficulties, and stood firm unto the end. Notwithstanding the attacks and calumnies of envious and wicked men, he remained steadfast to his own faith,\* and thus brought others also to worship and adore before his God.† But while we admire Daniel's success, we are taught also to discern the cause of Daniel's strength. It was "because an excellent spirit was in him,"‡ and because he kept alive that spirit by prayer and supplication before his God continually|| that Daniel prevailed. The God Whom he served was able to deliver him even out of the very jaws of lions.

Thus do we on this day, by precept as well as by example, learn to realize the words of St. Paul, that "when we are weak then are we strong." We are taught how "God's strength is made perfect in our weakness," (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10,) and how we can "do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth us." (Phil. iv. 13.)

\* Evening Lesson, verse 10;

† verse 26;   ‡ verse 3;   || verse 11.

## Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Eph. v. 15.

*Morning Lesson*, Joel, ii.

*Gospel*, St. Matt. xxii. 1.

*Evening Lesson*, Micah, vi.

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WE have now been taught to live quietly and godly here on earth, under the rule and direction of God's Holy Spirit. Step by step, the Church has led us on, showing us how to add grace to grace, and virtue to virtue. Now she would carry us gradually onwards to wait for the coming of our Lord. Looking out, as it were, for the return of Advent she would prepare our minds to meet it by gentle warnings of our Lord's approach. Thus does she conclude her holy round of practical teaching. Having thoroughly furnished us unto all good works, now she takes heed to warn us betimes, that at our Lord's return we may be found living in the constant practice of those good works which He would have us do. This then is the object which, from this time, we may clearly trace in the course of her weekly services. In the gospel for to-day, the state of Christ's Church militant here on earth is described under the figure of a marriage feast.\* We are the guests whom our heavenly Father has called or invited into it to share the blessings

\* Verse 2.

of His kingdom of grace.\* He, Himself, is the King Who has bidden us. In the place of the Jews who refused His Prophets and rejected His own Son,† He has made us Gentiles to be members of His Church on earth, and inheritors of His kingdom in heaven. Here He provides us with the highest blessings which can be offered to the sons of men. He applies to us the merits of the blessed sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;‡ He bestows upon us the riches of His grace, and sustains us with hopes of future glory. He gives us a new garment of innocence and holiness which He commands us to put on, and with which He will expect to find us clothed. By this "garment," we may understand that state of justification and sanctification which was spoken of in the epistle for last Sunday, under the name of the "new man." God first gave it to us at our baptism, and then He commanded us to watch and keep it, giving us means so to do.

We see then that it is not enough to have received it, unless we also preserve it, and bind it closely about us. The Lord of the Feast, in the parable, had, according to the custom of eastern nations, provided his guests with garments suited to the occasion,|| yet one there was, who, neglecting to put on his garment, was found wanting. When the King came in to see the guests, he was therefore cast out from His presence. Though he had been duly "called" to the royal banquet, he was not "chosen" as worthy to partake of it.§ Here, then, is the point on which our lesson this day

\* Gospel, verse 3; † verse 6; ‡ verse 4;  
|| verses 11, 12; § verse 14.

turns. We also are expecting the return of our Heavenly King ; we also are looking out for the time when He shall come to "see"\* and judge His people. We have had the wedding garment given to us, which is to make us meet for His presence, and we have been taught, (especially during the season which is now drawing to a close,) how to preserve it and put it on. We must, therefore, take heed to the teaching of the Church this day, when she bids us so prepare to meet our God, that when He shall return, He may recognize upon us that holy garment with which He once provided us. The lessons, both in the morning and evening, warn us of the approach of our heavenly King. The day of the Lord is described as being "great and very terrible :"+ His coming as that which none can abide without fear and trembling. All the terrors of the siege of Jerusalem and the horrors which God's people at that time endured,‡ are brought forward as very faint types of that awful day, when the Lord shall be heard to "utter His glorious voice."|| That we may not be found confounded and speechless at that terrible moment, we must even now take heed to put on that holy garment with which our Lord will expect to find us clothed. This is what the services for this day teach us to do. The wedding garment of Christians is the sanctification of their souls and bodies. It is that state of which the prophet Micah speaks in the evening lesson, when he tells us "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God."§ For this sanctification then we are

\* Gospel, verse 11. † Morn. Less. verse 11 ;

‡ verse 4, &c. ; § Even. Less. verse 8.

this day taught to pray. Bearing in mind that it is God Who has once clothed us with innocence and purity, we pray in the collect that He Who has brought us into this blessed state would continue to "keep us from all things that may hurt us." But watchfulness and caution on our part must ever be joined to dependance upon God. While we pray to God to keep us from hurtful things, we must see that we ourselves run not into them. The epistle therefore shows us how to act up to this prayer in our daily lives. First, by walking "circumspectly"\* or carefully.

The more evil the times and circumstances in which we live, and the greater the temptations to which we are subject, the more careful should we be to avoid those things which most easily ensnare us, and watch against those sins by which we are most easily beset. Then, seeing that the time is short, and that the day of the Lord is at hand, we must be diligent to "redeem"\* or *buy it back* again. That which we have lost by idleness and folly, we must atone for by penitence and humiliation, and we must make up by increased diligence for that which we have wasted or misused. Moderation in all things is another part of Christian watchfulness. We who have been made temples of the Holy Ghost, and whose souls have been washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb, must refrain from any kind of excess† which might injure or defile them. Even though we may not be tempted to transgress by actual drunkenness, yet there are many ways in which the flesh or the body may gain such a

\* Epistle, verse 15; † verse 18.

hold over us as to soil the brightness of our baptismal "garment," and unfit us for the service of God. Thus, even in the youngest of Christ's members, selfishness, or greediness, or idleness, or the love of ease and pleasure, may defile the soul and mar the work which the Holy Spirit is there carrying on. Our aim, then, should be to restrain these inclinations, and keep ourselves always in a fit state to serve God ; so, being "ready both in body and soul,"\* the Holy Spirit dwelling within us may fill our mouths with His praise, and enable us "cheerfully to accomplish those things which God would have done." Even if we should at any time chance to be "defiled and spotted by the flesh," yet we may still "turn to the Lord with weeping, and with fasting, and with praying," until He also "return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him."†

Thus clothed with the spiritual garment of purity and holiness, we may humbly trust to be fit to stand in the presence of our Lord. When the King shall "come in to see the guests,"‡ we shall be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints." (Rev. xix. 8.) We shall find ourselves not only to have been "called" into His kingdom of grace, but "chosen" also to live with Him in His "kingdom of glory."||

\* Collect. † Morning Lesson, verse 13.

‡ Gospel, verse 11; || verse 14.



## Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Eph. vi. 10.      *Morning Lesson*, Hab. ii.  
*Gospel*, St. John, iv. 46.    *Evening Lesson*, Prov. i.

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FROM the services of this day, we may learn something of the manner in which Christians are to await the coming of the Lord. Pardoned and cleansed from past sins, they must stand armed and ready, and looking out for His return. Thus from the collect and gospel we gather hopes of pardon and of peace; the epistle teaches us to put on the whole armour of God; while the lessons bid us quietly watch, living in the practice of those good works which our Lord Himself has prepared for us to walk in.

To attain to this state of peaceful preparation, we must first seek forgiveness and cleansing at God's hands. Sins act upon the soul as diseases do upon the body. They disturb and weaken it, and incapacitate it for the duties which it has to perform; therefore, until we are released from our past sins, we cannot go steadily forward in the service of God. That we may obtain this remission is, then, the object of our petition in the collect for this day. In this prayer we ask for pardon; then for peace as the consequence of pardon; and having thus

secured peace with God and with ourselves, lastly we implore His grace to serve Him with a quiet mind. To Christ, as the great Healer and Purifier of mankind, the gospel for this day bids us look up. In the cure of the nobleman's son which it records,\* we find an encouragement to hope that He will also heal our diseased souls, and strengthen them to serve Him. But, as the nobleman sought his son's cure, so must we seek ours also. At first his faith was very weak and imperfect, yet he seems to have acted up to the light received and so he obtained a blessing.† Overwhelmed with grief and distress of mind, he had thrown himself upon the mercy of Christ. He knew not yet the full extent of the Saviour's mighty power, but as far as he did know he sought to profit by it. Our Lord then looks mercifully upon him, and has compassion upon his ignorance.‡ By granting his request in the manner in which he least expects it,|| He discloses to him the wonders of His divine power, so that this nobleman and all his house are converted unto the faith.§

Thus does our Lord Jesus Christ deal also with repentant sinners. When heavy laden and wearied with the burden of our sins, we come to Him to heal the diseases of our souls, He looks upon us with His mercy, and has compassion upon our ignorance and infirmity. Though our knowledge of God should at first be weak and imperfect, yet if we are sincere He leads us on to higher degrees of faith. By using His Word only for our cure, without

\* Gospel, verse 50; † verse 49; ‡ verse 48;

|| verse 51; § verse 54.

making Himself visible amongst us, He would show us that He is as powerful to heal when removed from our sight as when outwardly present to the eye of sense,—thus teaching us to believe in His omnipresent power, and to walk by faith and not by sight. To us then, as to the nobleman's son, he speaks the word only and we are healed. By this means it is that He pardons and delivers us from all our sins; confirms and strengthens us in all goodness, and restores us to everlasting life. But Christians who have been thus pardoned and cleansed by the blood of Christ, must watch very closely lest they fall back into the sins from which they have been redeemed, and so their last state be worse than the first. Remembering that they have to fight "against principalities and powers," against spiritual wickedness and works of darkness,\* they must stand in the attitude of soldiers watching for an enemy, and put on, as the epistle of this day directs, the whole of the Christian armour. Truth is to be to them as a girdle by which they are bound about and supported.† Righteousness or holiness of conversation the breast-plate by which their bodies are to be covered. As true followers of the gospel of peace, they must‡ walk at peace with God, with each other, and with themselves. To this they have to add the hope of salvation,§ the defence of faith,§ the sure guidance of God's Holy Word, and the safeguard of constant prayer.¶ Thus armed, we shall live as true soldiers and servants of Christ our King. Enrolled under His banner, resist-

\* Epistle, verse 12; † verse 14; ‡ verse 15;  
 § verse 17; § verse 16; ¶ verse 18.

ing His enemies, and faithful to the post He has assigned us, we shall be found ready to enter in with Him at whatever hour our Lord shall come.

The portion of Scripture selected to be read to us this morning, would also seem to carry out this lesson. The prophet is here denouncing the sins, and woes, and dangers of proud Babylon, and the utter destruction which is in store for her rebellious people. But at the same time He speaks of a watchman,\* who, looking out for the danger, is armed and ready and prepared against it. Such is the attitude of the Christian. Standing on the strong tower of the Church of Christ\* he watches for the voice of God, to hear "what He will say to him, and what he will answer when he is reproved." Here he learns to flee those vices which form the misery and danger of the world without. He watches against pride,† intemperance, and covetousness,‡ as against those things which are most displeasing to God. Here then he may live in quietness and confidence, even in the midst of the trouble and confusion which surround him in the world,—for by faith he sees God present in His holy temple, and all the world keeping silence before Him.¶

And that the watchful servant of Christ may be found thoroughly furnished unto all good works, the Church now opens to us the treasures of the Book of Proverbs, and reads to us the instruction provided for us there. In this precious book there is teaching and guidance for the young; counsel, reproof, and instruction

\* Morn. Less. verse 1; † verse 5; ‡ verse 9;  
 ¶ verse 20.

for all.\* The chapter for this evening contains an earnest appeal even from God Himself, to forsake the ways of temptation and walk in the fear of the Lord. It sets before us in strong contrast the end of those who reject and of those who follow the ways of wisdom. While the former will be caught in a net to their own destruction,† the latter will be found clothed with the grace of God, and armed with His defence. With us, then, it remains to listen to these divine lessons, and to strengthen ourselves with the teaching of God's Holy Word; to look out for the coming of our Lord, and to stand with our loins girded about, and our lamps burning. Thus, pardoned through the merits of our Blessed Redeemer, and cleansed by His blood,‡ we shall "dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil;"|| we shall be enabled to "both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of our Lord." (Lam. iii. 26.)

\* Even. Less. verse 4;    † verse 17.    ‡ Collect.  
 || Even. Less. verse 33.

Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

*Epistle*, Phil. i. 3.

*Morning Lesson*, Prov. ii.

*Gospel*, St. Matt. xviii. 21.

*Evening Lesson*, Prov. iii.

THE close of the Church's year may remind us of the close of life. As we gradually draw nearer towards it, our watchfulness seems to deepen and our preparations to become more complete. To-day the whole Church is directed into "patient waiting for Christ." (2 Thess. iii. 15.)\* As fellow servants of the same great household,† its members are taught to live in the practice of mutual prayer, and love, and good works,‡ that our Lord, when He cometh, may find them so doing. This comparison of the Church to a household is one which Holy Scripture frequently employs. Christ is said to be "a Son over His own house, Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our faith firm unto the end." (Heb. iii. 6.) "The Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work." (St. Mark, xiii. 34.) With the ministers or stewards of this house He has left a commission to rule over their fellow servants, and give to each

\* See also Epistle. † Collect and Gospel.

‡ Epistle, Gospel, and Lessons.

their portion of meat in due season. To the servants He has commanded that they quietly take the work which is appointed them, and live in unity and peace one with another. All are desired to watch, not knowing at what hour their Lord will come.

The collect for this day, taking up this figure, prays for God's protection upon "His household, the Church;" it implores that the Lord would keep it free from all adversities, and make it continually to serve Him in all good works. With the same meaning the gospel sets before us, by a parable, our position as fellow servants of the heavenly household. Like the servant in the parable, our debt was more than we could pay; "our iniquities were more in number than the hairs of our head," (Ps. xl. 15;) "we had sinned and come short of the glory of God," (Rom. iii. 23;) and "the wages of sin is death," (Rom. vi. 23;) "no man might deliver his brother or make agreement unto God for him." (Ps. xlix. 6.) But as the lord in the parable freely forgave his servant, so did God for Christ's sake freely forgive us. "He so commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) "In His blood was declared unto us forgiveness of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." (Rom. iii. 25.) Thus does the conduct of this earthly king towards his servant represent to us, as in a very faint type, the mercy of our heavenly King towards the members of His household, the Church. In the conduct of the servant, also, we may see a lesson profitable for our own warning and instruction. We may learn from it to look upon the injuries and

affronts which we receive from our fellow servants in their proper light. Whatever we may fancy to be the amount of any trespasses committed against ourselves, those which we have committed against our divine Lord and Master as far exceed it as the ten thousand talents exceeded the paltry sum of one hundred pence.\*

If, then, while we receive such merciful treatment at God's hands, we fall into the sin of the unforgiving servant, the sentence uttered against him may also be pronounced against us. Our Lord, Who forgives us our trespasses "as we forgive them that trespass against us," may be wroth, and deliver us again to the "tormentors,"† that is, the death and punishment from which He had formerly rescued us.

We see, then, from this gospel, that the members of God's household, who would live together in "continual godliness,"‡ must love one another as God has loved them, and forgive even as they hope to be forgiven. To lead us on still further in this holy training, the lessons point out to the members of this same household, how they may be "devoutly given to all good works." In the chapter for this morning the study and cultivation of true "wisdom"§ are enjoined as the root and foundation of all godliness. By "wisdom" we are to understand the voice of God—the "Word" of the Son of God, teaching us through His Holy Spirit.

To this heavenly Voice, then, we must listen for guidance, instruction, and reproof. We must hearken to its holy teaching when it

\* Gospel, verses 24, 28; † verse 34. ‡ Collect.

§ Morning Lesson, verse 2.



warns us against strange paths, and bids us walk in the way of good men;\* when it promises us that by its holy influence we shall “understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”† This same Voice it is, which, in the lesson for the evening, addresses us as a father speaking to his son.‡ Following up the teaching of the morning, it exhorts us, in the opening of this chapter, to carry out our “understanding” into obedience, our knowledge of God into the fear and love of Him. What will be the practical results of so doing, we find from the verses which follow. God, being present with us in all things, our whole life will be His care, and our every action under His controul.|| In all our ways we shall acknowledge Him, and He shall direct our paths.§ Even under chastening we shall neither be weary nor faint, knowing that it comes from the hand of Him Who loveth whom He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.¶ Thus controuled and regulated by divine Wisdom, we shall be enabled to live in the practice of those heavenly virtues of humility, charity, and godliness, which are here inculcated. Such are some of the good works in the discharge of which the servants of God’s household are to wait for the coming of their Lord.

The epistle seems to sum up, as in a whole, the lessons which have been set before us this day. As a good and faithful steward of Christ, St. Paul is praying for and exhorting that portion of God’s church and household established at Philippi.\*\* From his words, then, we, as

\* Morn. Less. verses 13, 20; † verse 5.

‡ Even. Less. verse 1, &c.; § verses 24, 26;

¶ verse 6; \*\* Epistle, verse 3, &c.

members of another branch of the same great household, may learn our privileges and our duty. We, like the Philippian converts, have been "brought into the fellowship of the gospel,"\* and made partakers of God's grace. The prayers of God's ministers and stewards are still offered up for our confirmation in the gospel, and God's grace still descends in answer to their petitions. We, then, like those to whom this passage is addressed, must strive so to walk in God's law, and follow His divine wisdom, that "our love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."† Being thus filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God, we may trust that He Who hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.‡

\* Epistle, verse 5;    † verse 9;    ‡ verse 6.

## Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Phil. iii. 17.      *Morning Lesson*, Prov. xi.  
*Gospel*, St. Matt. xxii. 15.      *Evening Lesson*, Prov. xii.

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AGAIN to-day the Church and her members are represented as in an expectant and militant state, looking out and waiting for the coming of their Lord. As the services for last Sunday spoke of them as servants attached to the household of God, so now they are likened to *citizens* belonging to His heavenly country. Godliness is still to be their aim and object; prayer and watching, their preparation and employment.

To devout prayer, then, as the only means of obtaining godliness, the collect for this day leads us. The petition contained in it, would seem to be the result of the lessons which, on the several past Sundays, have been gradually laid before us. The figures of "the wedding-garment,"\* of the "armour of God,"† of the servant of whom his Lord would take account,‡ have all taught us the necessity of "godliness" and good works; but of these God alone is the author and giver. He alone can supply with "all things that pertain unto life and godliness,"

\* See Twentieth Sunday.      † Twenty-first Sunday.

‡ Twenty-second Sunday.

(2 St. Peter, i. 3.) To Him, therefore, the Church now devoutly turns, and for these she faithfully prays. These are amongst the "things"\* for which she so fervently asks, when on this day she raises up her voice in united supplication to Him Who is our "refuge and strength." We, therefore, as individual members of her one Body, must join our prayers with the general cry; and that they may be "effectually obtained" they must be faithfully offered up; that God may be ready to hear them, they must be "devout." Such, then, must be the prayers of those who are preparing to meet their God. What their lives should be, is best described by St. Paul, when, in this day's epistle, he tells us to have "our conversation in heaven."†

The meaning of this expression is the same as *citizenship* or *home*. It is used with reference to the place from whence we derive our possessions and our interests. But to enter fully into the sense in which it here stands, we must understand something of the circumstances under which the apostle used it. The people to whom St. Paul wrote this epistle, as well as many of the neighbouring nations and towns, claimed the right of being citizens of Rome. Their citizenship with this great city gave them many rights and privileges which it was an advantage to them to possess. It procured their freedom, exempted them from certain punishments, and insured to them certain favours and indulgencies. All these they were allowed to enjoy, even though born in a distant country, and inhabiting a

\* Collect for the day. † Verse 20.

distant town, provided they observed the customs and manners of the great city to which they thus belonged. Such is the citizenship of the Christian. Being by baptism incorporated into, or made a member of Christ's kingdom, he becomes a sharer in the blessings and privileges of the inhabitants of heaven. He is made a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. (Eph. ii. 19.) Even whilst still an inhabitant of this lower world, his hopes, his affections, and his home are in heaven. To this "city of the living God," (Heb. xii. 22,) into the privileges of which he is already admitted, he hopes one day to come. His aim, then, is to walk on earth as becomes the future inhabitant of God's heavenly city; to retain about him its customs and practices, and live according to its laws. Thus the earthly things by which he is surrounded will lose their power over him. He will not "mind them,"\* nor live for them, as those over whose sad "end" St. Paul here laments. Rather, dwelling in spirit with those saints of God with whom he is now fellow-heir and fellow-citizen, and following their examples, he will look for the time when our Lord Jesus Christ shall come to take His Body from the earth where it is now wandering, and admit it into heaven, its true and eternal home.†

But the people who held their rights and privileges in a foreign land, were not therefore unfitted for living and acting in the country where they resided. So neither are Christians. The duties which we owe to God, as citizens of heaven, do not unfit us for the duties which

\* Epistle, verse 19;    † See verses 20 and 21.

we owe to our fellow-men as citizens of the world.

This, it seems, is what we may learn from the words of our Lord Himself in the gospel for to-day.\* They were spoken in answer to those, who, in order to perplex and ensnare Him, pretended to think that the tribute, which as subjects they were to pay to their earthly sovereign, was inconsistent with the allegiance due to their heavenly King ; and so they remain, as a standing rule and guide to all, in all times and circumstances of the world. God has indeed required that we should present our bodies, souls, and spirits, a living sacrifice unto Him. He has created, preserved, and regenerated them ; therefore they are His. By training them to His service, and using them to His glory, we “render unto God the things that be God’s ;” but in so doing, the duty or “tribute” which is due to earthly authorities and laws, need not be neglected or laid aside. Our different stations, positions, and callings in life must receive the regard and attention required by them, where that regard does not interfere with the commandments of God. To our sovereign we must pay loyalty and submission ; to our parents, honour and reverence ; to our masters, fidelity and obedience ; to one another we owe unity, love, and mutual assistance. Even our bodily wants and necessities demand of us that we should each labour diligently in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call us. These different relations being all the institutions and appointments of God Himself, our diligent discharge

\* Verse 21.

of them cannot but be pleasing in His sight, and may even be considered as forming a part of our duty to Him. By fulfilling them, therefore, we shall obey our Saviour's injunction of "rendering unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's," while at the same time we neglect not to "render unto God the things that be God's."

It is as if to carry out this teaching that the lessons appointed to be read out of the Book of Proverbs, all speak to us of the relative duties of life. They point out to Christians how to act in their common calling, and how to deal in their mutual intercourse with each other. In that for this morning, the wise man is exhorting us to justice, honesty, and integrity. A "false balance,"\* he tells us, "is abomination unto the Lord," therefore should we render to every man that which is his due: "custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." (Romans, xiii. 7.)† Cruelty, backbiting, and slandering,‡ are equally unbecoming in those who profess themselves servants of God. The citizens of God's heavenly city must therefore strive to be merciful, faithful, concealing that which is of prejudice to their neighbours,|| liberal to the needy, peaceful in their own house, desiring in all things "only good."§ So also in the evening lesson, we are taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, eating our own bread with quietness, in love and concord one with another.

Thus it is, that in the practice of these holy

\* Verse 1;    † verse 17;    verses 9, 13;  
                   || verse 13;    § verse 23.

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precepts we may live in the world below, and yet have our "conversation"\* above. While engaged in the duties and cares of this earthly life, we may yet be looking out for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.\*

\* Epistle, verse 20.



## Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

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*Epistle*, Col. i. 3.  
*Gospel*, St. Matt. ix. 18.

*Morning Lesson*, Prov. xiii.  
*Evening Lesson*, Prov. xiv.

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THIS season of practical teaching is now drawing to a close. During the course of it we have learned our duty, and discovered our temptations. We have seen the way in which God would have us walk, and the helps and assistances by which He enables us to walk in it. But this is not all. The knowledge of the many things which we ought to have done, will have shown to us how many things we have left undone; the contemplation of the holiness to which we are called will have made us sensible how great are our short-comings. This day, then, we come before God as unprofitable servants. We throw ourselves upon His mercy, and beg of Him a full and free pardon for our many transgressions.\* And as if to make us do so more earnestly, the latter part of the collect discovers to us the awful nature of sin. Sin is like a dangerous and deceitful chain, which winds itself about us, taking us in its snares before we are aware. If one link or band is allowed to press upon us without being removed, the next step which we take will en-

\* See Collect.

wrap us in another, and so on until our whole body becomes entangled, our limbs fixed and unable to move. So it is with sin. One little sin of infirmity or frailty, may seem to us but a very small matter, but if wilfully and knowingly retained and indulged in, it may lead to another, and another, until the whole soul, wrapped in the bands of sin, is chained down and disabled, unfit for the service which God requires of it. Thus may we, by little and little, be brought into that fearful state which Holy Scripture compares to slavery, when it tells us, that to whomsoever we yield ourselves servants to obey, his servants we are to whom we obey, (Rom. vi. 13,) and that, when we commit sin we become the servants, or slaves, of sin. (St. John, viii. 34.) We see, then, why the collect for this day prays so especially against sins of "frailty" or weakness; for these, though small in themselves, may be the first links of that chain which twines itself so fearfully about us. They may hinder the work of God in our souls, and render vain all the holy teaching which He has provided for us.

From all, or any of these bands, Christ of His bountiful goodness will deliver us. He Who raised the daughter of Jairus,\* and cured the woman of her twelve years' disease, will also heal our spiritual sickness and restore us to spiritual life. But, while, from these miracles, we thus derive comfort and encouragement, we also learn a lesson applicable for our spiritual instruction. In both these cases, it was the mighty power of Christ, act-

\* Gospel, verse 25.

ing upon a mind prepared by faith, which cured the sick and raised up the dead ; but neither the cure nor the resurrection were accomplished, until by an outward visible act, those who received or participated in the blessing had proved the reality of their faith. This is especially the case in the cure of the woman. It was the mysterious "virtue which went out of" Christ (St. Mark, v. 30 ; see also St. Luke, vi. 19,) which healed her, and it was her faith which brought her to Him, but it was only when she touched the hem of our Blessed Saviour's garment, that the "virtue" was applied to her, and she "felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." Thus also is it with us who need to be cured of the deadly disease of sin, and restored to spiritual life. Christ, though no longer visibly present amongst us, has appointed certain outward signs, the devout use of which will be to us like spiritually touching the hem of our Saviour's garment.

Such are, the water in baptism, and the sacred elements in the Holy Communion, whereby our souls are cleansed and strengthened. The cleansing and strengthening which they supply come from "the virtue" which "goes out of" Christ Himself ; but it is only when by faith we use these holy signs, that we receive the pledge or assurance of the benefits being actually imparted to us. Thus also in some degree it is with absolution, the blessings of which we are this day seeking. Oppressed with the weight of our past transgressions, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, and pray to God to absolve us from

them. So far then our faith has brought us near to Christ, and we may humbly trust that He will heal us ; but that we may receive some outward assurance of our being so healed, He has directed His ministers to pronounce pardon and absolution in His Name, upon "all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel." This is the means by which He now says to us, "Be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole."\* The epistle seems to carry on these thoughts by setting before us the blessedness of being brought near to Christ by faith.

This passage was originally addressed by St. Paul to those Colossian converts who had been so joined to Christ, and knew the grace of God in truth,"† who had remained in the fear and love of God, and whom God was now ripening and preparing for His kingdom. He exhorts them to continue unto the end, increasing in the knowledge of God and in every good word and work. Thus does the Church, in the name of Christ her Head, speak to us her members even now. She has faithfully preached Christ unto us, and taught us that there is none other name under heaven, whereby we may be saved but His. Now, making us feel our need of His merits, she would lead us to apply them to ourselves by a true and living faith. Desiring that we may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, she teaches us in the proper lessons for this season, how we may "serve the Lord with all pleasing."‡

In the chapter for this day, especially, it is

\* Gospel, verse 22. † Epistle, verse 6; ‡ verse 10.

shown how we who have been made whole, may hereafter "serve and please God in newness of life." With many plain rules for our daily conduct, these lessons teach us, as did those for the last two Sundays, how every action is to be influenced by the love and fear of God, and reverence for His laws. With us then it remains to profit by the teaching which is thus provided for us ; to come to Christ with a deep sense of our infirmity, and with a true and lively faith to use the means appointed for our cure. So may we hope that the blessings bestowed upon those of whom we read this day may be extended also to us. By the "virtue" or grace which goes forth from Him, our Blessed Lord will "absolve us from our offences, and deliver us from the bands of our sins." By the same divine grace with which He has thus purified and cleansed us, He will strengthen us with all might and make us fruitful in every good word and work ; and so, step by step, will He lead us on, until He make us meet for the inheritance of the "Saints in Light."\*

\* Epistle.

## Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

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*For the Epistle, Jer. xxiii. 5. Morning Lesson, Prov. xv.*  
(or xvii.)

*Gospel, St. John, vi. 5. Evening Lesson, Prov. xvi.*  
(or xix.)

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ON this concluding Sunday, the Church would seem to sum up all her teaching during the whole Christian year. Christ our Saviour is on this day set before us as "He Who hath wrought all our works in us,"\* while the good works into which He came to lead us are inculcated and enforced.† Thus the collect prays for power to perform these good works, and teaches us something of the spirit in which we are to perform them; the lessons lead us directly into the practice of them; while the remainder of the services point to Christ as the Author and Giver of them all.

From this day's collect, then, we learn to understand the light in which God regards our spiritual labours, or "good works." They are to the Christian what the fruits of the earth are to the husbandman—the free gift of God bestowed according to the measure of our own exertions. When the seed is put into the ground, the diligent husbandman uses his utmost endeavours to bring it to maturity.

\* Epistle and Gospel. † Collect and Lessons.

Though he knows that it is the Lord alone Who maketh the earth to bring forth and bud, yet he acts as if the success depended upon his own labours. While he prays God to "bless and preserve to his use the kindly fruits of the earth," he breaks up the fallow ground, waters the tender plant, and spares no pains to make it grow and thrive; and so God blesses his labours with an abundant harvest, He rewards him according to his exertions. Thus also is it with the Christian. His heart is as the ground, in which has been sown the seed of God's holy Word. While, then, he knows that the "power to will and to do cometh from God only," he will yet "keep his heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. iv. 23.) With as much care as the husbandman roots out every weed or tare which might choke the good seed, so does the servant of God root out every evil habit, and cast away every wrong thought, which might hinder the springing up of God's Word within him. While he prays to God to "stir up" his feeble and languid will,\* he spares no pains on his own part to train and cultivate his heart, and seek for it the dews of God's heavenly grace; and so God blesses his labours by an abundant harvest of good works. We see, then, how it is, that without any claim to merit of our own, we may yet pray, as we do in the collect for this day, to be rewarded according to the *plenteousness* of our works. Just as the earthly labourer reaps the fruit of his toil, so do we reap the fruit of our exertions. When we sow little, we reap little; when we sow plenteously, we reap plenteously.

\* Collect.

Having, then, used this prayer, the people of God turn to the instruction provided for them in the lessons, that here they may learn how to practise those good works which are prepared for them to walk in. In these chapters, which are the last of those selected from the Book of Proverbs, we are taught what are the good fruits which are expected of us. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and patience, are each in their turns brought before us, as forming part of that divine wisdom which cometh from God only, (St. James, iii. 17,) and therefore belongeth only to the people of God.

To cultivate in us these holy tempers has been the purpose of the Church in all the practical teaching of the past season; but on this day more especially she stirs us up to practise them. Having carefully trained and nurtured us in the study of God's Holy Word, now she looks for the fruit of the teaching. Now, therefore, she calls upon every one of us, her members, particularly in those parts of the service which we have been considering, to "look well to ourselves, that we lose not the things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." But she does not leave us here. Our own righteousness, apart from the merits of Christ, would be but as "filthy rags." (Isa. lxiv. 6.) To Christ our Saviour, therefore, as "the Lord our righteousness,"\* the Scripture selected as the epistle for this day leads us. This passage sets before us in a prophecy the great work which our Redeemer has accomplished for us. He, the King of heaven and earth, con-

\* Epistle, verse 6.



descended to be born of a human family, as a son of the line or "branch" of David.\* Thus was He to unite in His own person the divine and human natures, that He might redeem His people from the bonndage of sin, clothe them with His merits, and lead them on towards the promised land of their heavenly inheritance.† Thus were these glorious prophecies accomplished in the person of Him of Whom we read in the gospel of this day as "that Prophet Which should come into the world."‡ He came amongst His people as their Prophet and Teacher, as well as their Priest and King. In the very miracle here recorded we see Him providing for the wants of His people, and ministering to their necessities. Thus does He to us even now. Even while He reigns as a King, He provides for our spiritual wants, and ministers to our spiritual necessities. Year by year we "come before Him," and "sit before Him," as His people, while by the voice of Holy Scripture and the Church, He brings before us the glorious truths of His nativity, suffering, and death; of His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the right hand of God: and we afterwards listen to His warning voice, when He bids us walk in those good works for which He came to purify us. That we may not prove unworthy of such great privileges, we must do with regard to these spiritual provisions, as the disciples did with regard to their temporal gifts. Looking back upon the times and opportunities which we have wasted and misused, we must endeavour so to "gather them up,"||

\* Epistle, verse 5; † see verses 7, 8.

‡ Gospel, verse 14; || verse 12.

and improve them for the future, that each succeeding year may find us more closely following the footsteps, and better prepared to welcome the coming of our Lord. Especially on this day we must pray that He would so "stir up our wills" within us, that in the strength of these holy privileges and advantages we may so "plenteously bring forth the fruit of good works," as to be of Him "plenteously rewarded."\*

Thus is our blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ constantly brought before us as the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending." (Rev. i. 8.) As the Church opened her year by proclaiming His coming, so now she closes it by preparing us for His return, as if to teach us that all our doings are nothing worth, unless begun, continued, and ended in Him.

\* Collect.

END OF PART II.

# THE CHRISTIAN TAUGHT,

&c.

## PART III.

### *Festivals and Saints' Days.*

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THE Church instructs us by example as well as by precept. On the festivals relating to our blessed Lord, and their accompanying Sundays, she has furnished us with rules of holy living. The saints' days and other holydays show us how, by the power of the grace of God, these holy rules have been carried out in the lives of men of like passions with ourselves. When, therefore, on these days we call to mind, successively, the virtues of each particular saint or martyr, we adore, not the men who shewed forth the good works, but Him Who wrought those good works in them. We "glorify God in them," and strive to "become followers of them, even as they were also of Christ."

From the earliest times, the Church has ever held sacred the memory of those who died for the faith of Christ. The days set apart to celebrate their death or martyrdom were called

the days of their birth, and were observed with joy, not with sorrow. Christians rejoiced that one of their number should have been born again from a world of sin and suffering into a world of holiness and happiness. They praised God for having taken him out of the Church militant, to form a part of the Church triumphant.

When, in after ages, the number of saints and martyrs increased, and the number of holydays multiplied with them, it became necessary to put a limit to their observance. Our branch of the Church, therefore, only retains in her calendar the names of those who were the immediate followers of our blessed Lord, and first preachers of His gospel; the commemoration of all others being reserved for the united festival of All Saints. In addition to these, we have two days sacred to the blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, on which we commemorate some mystery or doctrine referring to our Lord Himself: the festival of the Holy Innocents, who, being the first of those who glorified God by their deaths, are raised to the rank of martyrs; and the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, wherein we praise God for the blessings we receive from the ministration of angelic beings,—we strive to imitate their purity and copy their perfect obedience.

Such are the festivals which the Church bids us observe in addition to those immediately relating to our Lord Himself; and on each of these holydays she provides a separate service for our instruction and improvement. The epistle and gospel usually supply

us with part of the life, and sometimes a portion of the writings, of him whose memory we are celebrating. The collects for the most part gather up the instruction which is to be drawn from them, while the lessons, being selected from the practical books of Holy Scripture, or of the Apocryphal writings, are fitted for the guidance of those who are striving to follow in the steps of the holy saints of God.

Thus are the members of the Church invisible even now permitted to influence and instruct their brethren of the Church militant upon earth. Like a great cloud of witnesses they compass us about, to guide and encourage us in our Christian course. We then, who would tread in their steps, must lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, while, with them, we look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of both their faith and ours. Thus may we be enabled so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of God's heavenly kingdom.

**St. Andrew's Day.**

(NOVEMBER 30.)

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*Epistle*, Romans, x. 9.  
*Gospel*, St. Matt. iv. 18.

*Morning Lesson*, Prov. xx.  
*Evening Lesson*, Prov. xxi.

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St. Andrew was the first disciple who came to Christ. His name stands therefore first in the "noble army" of saints and martyrs which the Church commemorates. Brought before us at the opening of Advent, he is, as it were, the first to proclaim that "we have found the Messiah," even Christ. (See St. John, i. 41.) The call of this apostle to the service of our Lord is related in the gospel for this day. The rest of his history is supplied by other portions of Holy Scripture and the earliest writings of the Christian Church.

It is in St. John's gospel that we find the first mention of the apostle St. Andrew. He was of Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, son of Jonas a fisherman of that town, and brother to Simon Peter. Instructed by John the Baptist, of whom he was a disciple, he had learned from him to expect the coming of the Messiah. When, therefore, he heard the Baptist address-

ing our Blessed Saviour as "the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world," (St. John, i. 36-41,) St. Andrew was prepared to follow our Lord. He went in and abode with Him, and from henceforth was devoted to the faith of Christ. The first act of the newly converted disciple was to make his brother Simon a sharer in his privileges. He went to him to tell him that he had found the Messiah, the Saviour of the world;—then both together rejoined our Lord. It was not, however, until a year afterwards, that they were called by our blessed Saviour to be His constant companions and attendants.

The occasion of their being called was this:—When on the sea of Galilee these two brethren were engaged in their usual trade of fishing,\* (See also St. Luke, v. 1-11,) our Lord comes to them, and by the miracle of the draught of fishes confirms their faith in His greatness and divinity. Seeing their minds thus prepared, He proclaims to them, that from henceforth they are to leave their humble calling, and to become fishers of the souls of men. At His word, they straightway leave their nets and follow Him without delay.

From being thus chosen to follow Christ, St. Andrew is still further honoured by being admitted to the number of the twelve apostles. With them he continued to teach and to preach during the lifetime of our Lord, (St. Mark, xiii. 3; St. John, xii. 22; St. John, vi. 8.) Three times during this period do we find his name mentioned with those of other apostles, as in attendance upon his divine Master.

\* Gospel, verse 18.

After the ascension of our blessed Saviour he took his share in the work of christianising the world. The part of the globe in which it fell to his lot to labour was Scythia, an uncivilized tract of country far north of the Holy Land. Here he continued to preach for many years, undaunted by the fury of the barbarous inhabitants and the dangers to which he was exposed. In passing to and from this country, he also instructed in the faith the different provinces of Asia Minor and many parts of Greece. It was at Patræ, a town in the province of Achaia, that he met with his death. The number of converts which he had made excited the rage of the proconsul or governor of the province, by whose orders he was scourged and crucified; and that his death might be more lingering he was fastened to the cross with cords instead of nails. St. Andrew, however, gloried in his torments. On seeing the cross he saluted it with transports, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for his Master's Name. Such was the life and death of this holy apostle.

Having thus traced his history, we now come to learn from the services of this day what is the lesson we should draw from his example. In them St. Andrew's call and his ready obedience are the points set forth for our imitation. The gospel relates the circumstances connected with them. The epistle and collect show us how to apply St. Andrew's example to ourselves.

That we have each individually, as well as in a body, been called by God, the epistle plainly teaches. When the Jews, the first-



called of God, were rejected on account of their disobedience and hardness of heart, the Gentiles were called in their stead. The same Lord, Who is "rich to all that call upon Him,"\* was willing that the Gentiles also should come to the knowledge of the faith. "But how should they call on Him in Whom they have not believed, and how should they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard, and how should they hear without a preacher?"†

To remove this difficulty God, in His mercy, provided preachers and ministers of the gospel, "whose sound was to go out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world."‡ By the mouths of those holy men, whose lives and deaths we are now about to commemorate, as well as by their successors in the Christian Church, God has called us to the knowledge of His word. He has taught us to call on His Name, and preached to us the gospel of peace. Though no longer visibly present among us, our blessed Lord still calls us by their means to believe in Him, to love Him, and to follow Him. From each one of us whom He has called unto Him in holy baptism He therefore expects that we should give up ourselves obediently to follow His holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life. Thus are all baptized Christians called, as St. Andrew was, to the service of their divine Lord and Master. By His holy word He has once called us, and by the dealings of His providence He still continues to plead with us: sometimes calling us afresh, and sometimes urging us on in the path which He

\* Epistle, verse 12; † verse 14; ‡ verse 18.

has marked out for us. With us, then, it remains to "follow Him without delay."\* God may not indeed now call us to such a high employment as that which fell to the lot of this holy apostle; but the same Lord Who pointed out to him the task of being "a fisherman," also points out to us our daily tasks and duties, however humble they may be. He "calls" us to them. It is then by continuing in these duties, however trivial they may appear, that we shall be best obeying our Master's call. Sometimes, however, in this our daily path, God's holy will and commandments may differ from the voice of the world and our own inclination: sometimes, even in trifling things, we may have to choose between God and mammon. Then we may humbly believe that God is calling us on still higher. We must remember the example of the apostle St. Andrew, and pray for grace to imitate it. We must leave the temptation which would hold us back, and follow Him without delay.

This was the course of the saints of God, and the principle which made them to overcome even unto death. Let us then follow in their steps. Taking the word of God for our guide, let us learn the precepts by which they lived, and then "go and do likewise." The practical portions of Scripture selected for these holydays, particularly that appointed for this day, will especially suit this purpose. To regulate our lives according to these holy rules must be our constant aim, if we would be found amongst the number of those "called to be saints:" for "a just man walketh in his in-

\* Collect.

tegrity," and "even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."\* But let us not be discouraged at so high a standard. "A man's goings," we are told, "are of the Lord;"† and He Who "gave such grace unto the holy apostle St. Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of our Lord Jesus Christ," will likewise enable us, who have been called by His holy word, to give up ourselves obediently to follow His holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life.

We learn then, on this day, how even the humblest and lowliest Christian may be following the footsteps of the most holy saints of God, if only he strive "to do his duty in that state of life to which it hath pleased God to call him."

\* Morn. Less. verses 7, 11; † verse 24.

**St. Thomas's Day.**

(DECEMBER 21.)

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*Epistle*, Eph. ii. 19.      *Morning Lesson*, Prov. xxiii.  
*Gospel*, St. John, xx. 24.      *Evening Lesson*, Prov. xxiv.

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St. Thomas, whom we commemorate to-day, was one of the twelve apostles. Of his early life very little is known. His name, "Thomas," as well as that of "Didymus," by which he was sometimes called, signifies, each in its respective language, "a twin." He was a Jew, and probably, like St. Peter, a fisherman of Galilee. The first mention which Holy Scripture makes of him (after his call to the apostolate) gives an instance of his zeal and devotion. Our blessed Lord desired to return into Judea, that He might raise Lazarus from the dead. From this the other apostles were dissuading Him, fearing for their divine Master the violence of the Jews. St. Thomas, however, implores them not to hinder Christ's journey thither, even at the cost of their own lives. Rather, said he, "let us also go, that we may die with Him," (St. John, xi. 7-16.) Two of the other notices, which Holy Scripture takes of St. Thomas, show him to us in a different character. They tell us of his slowness to believe.

When, on the occasion of the Last Supper,

our Saviour was speaking to His disciples of the joys of heaven, and of the way to attain them, St. Thomas declared that he knew not the place, neither the way which led thereto, (St. John, xiv. 5.) Again,—when, after the resurrection, our Lord appeared to the other apostles, St. Thomas refused to give credit to the fact on the testimony of their word. His own eyes must needs be his witnesses, before he would believe: and so he showed that he walked not by faith but by sight only.\* Our Lord's mild and gentle rebuke having convinced him of his error, he, from that time, proved the sincerity of his faith by the zeal with which he laboured in his Master's service, even laying down his life for His sake. St. Thomas is again found amongst the other apostles at the subsequent appearance of the risen Saviour, at the sea of Tiberias, (St. John, xxi. 2;) and, after the ascension, we read of him as engaged in casting the lot which was to decide the election of St. Matthias, (Acts i. 13.) He preached in the eastern countries of Parthia, Media, and Persia, and at length came to India, where he received the crown of martyrdom at the hands of the Brahmans, the priests of the false religion of the Indian nation. Some men of this profession, fearing the influence of his teaching upon their own sect, assaulted and killed him whilst he was engaged in prayer. This latter country still bears some traces of the holy labours of this apostle. A body of Christians still exist, who, from the name of St. Thomas which they bear, and the purity of their faith which, in a great measure,

\* Gospel, verse 25.

they still retain, are supposed to be a Church originally planted by him.

Thus we find, in the character of this apostle, failings mixed up with virtues, a slowness of belief combined with zeal and fervour of devotion.

But it is from his failings that the Church would draw her chief lesson this day. As if to teach us that even the weaknesses and imperfections of God's saints may be profitable to those that come after them, she selects the unbelief of St. Thomas as the point to which our thoughts on this day should turn. She chooses it as the subject of the gospel for the day, and from it takes occasion to impress upon us the necessity of a right faith.

St. Thomas's unbelief was doubtless a fault. We know it by the reproof which it drew forth from our Lord. Yet God, Who brings good out of evil, has caused even the failings of His apostle to minister to our benefit. It was, as the collect tells us, "for the more confirmation of the faith,"\* that the holy apostle St. Thomas was suffered to doubt: and so indeed has it proved. The words† with which he replied to the rebuke of our Saviour not only bear witness to the truth of the resurrection, but remain in all ages of the Christian Church a standing testimony to the doctrine of our blessed Lord's divinity. This point of doctrine is the foundation of all Christianity, the very root and ground-work of all true religion: "for the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man," (Athanasian Creed.) So the epistle

\* Collect.

† Gospel, verse 28.

for this day teaches us. The Church or Body of Christ, visible as well as invisible, is here represented as being one great building, of which the apostles are styled the foundations;\* because they were as the first stones, upon which others were to be reared up. But of this building, Christ, our divine Lord and Master, is alone the corner stone;† for from Him alone it is that we derive our support and safety. By uniting His divine to our human nature, He has become to us justification, sanctification, and redemption; and by the strength of this, His divine power, He gathers us together in one, and so, fitly framing us together, makes us grow up an holy temple unto Himself.

And it is not without a meaning that this truth is brought before us at a time when we are about to commemorate our blessed Lord's nativity. When we draw near to celebrate our Saviour's life upon earth, it must ever be with reverent thoughts of His divinity. To little purpose should we commemorate the several acts of his most holy life and death, unless we believed that He Who thus suffered for us in the flesh, is also "our Lord and our God."‡ Therefore does the Church take this opportunity of teaching us, and that by the mouth of the holy apostle St. Thomas, to "believe perfectly and without all doubt"§ in our Lord Jesus Christ.

From this day's festival, then, we learn to walk by faith and not by sight, and so to seek for ourselves the blessing which the apostle

\* Epistle, verse 20; † verse 20. ‡ Gospel, verse 28.  
§ Collect.

missed. This lesson is one of which we, who live in the present age of the Church, have continual need. Though we belong to a Body of which one part is visible here on earth, yet our Head and Corner Stone is invisible in heaven. He Who once came into the world as perfect Man now reigns above, "God over all, blessed for ever." Of Him we must believe that He is really present with us, though we see Him not: we must think of Him as a King Who reigns over us, as a Prophet Who teaches us, as a Priest Who continually intercedes for us. Believing that "He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," (Heb. xi. 6,) we must govern our every thought and action according to His will. When we read His word, we must strive to realize that it is His voice which is speaking to us, and so love and obey it accordingly. In all our trials and temptations we must "endure, as seeing Him Who is invisible;" for so only shall we have strength to stand, and not to "faint in the day of adversity."\*

This, then, is the faith which overcometh the world: this is to believe without seeing—to walk by faith, and not by sight; and to such as are striving to attain this faith, it is promised that they shall be of those whom our Saviour has pronounced to be "blessed."†

\* Even. Less. verse 10.

† Gospel, verse 29.



**St. Stephen's Day.**

(DECEMBER 26.)

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*For the Epistle*, Acts, vii. 55.    *Morning Lessons*, Prov.  
xxviii. Acts, vi. 8;  
and vii. 1—30.  
*Gospel*, St. Matt. xxiii. 34.    *Evening Lessons*, Eccles.  
iv. Acts, vii. 30—55.

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St. Stephen was the first martyr. His death was the first fruits of that faith which was brought into the world by the incarnation of our blessed Lord and Saviour. His day, therefore, follows that of the Nativity; and, next to him, we commemorate in order two other days dedicated to martyrs. Thus,—St. Stephen, the martyr in will and deed; St. John, the martyr in will though not in deed; and the Holy Innocents, who were martyrs in deed only, but not in will,—all wait on Him Who was the King of martyrs. Of these, St. Stephen is the one whom we commemorate to-day.

His history, related to us in the early part of the Acts of the Apostles, forms the subject of the second proper lessons and of the epistle for this day. From it we gather the following facts. St. Stephen was one of those seven men whom the apostles appointed to the office of deacon, in order to assist them in the ministry of the Church. The duties of this

office included the distribution of alms to the faithful, and the baptism of new converts, as well as the preaching of the Word. All these St. Stephen fulfilled with the zeal and devotion of one who was "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," (Acts vi. 5;) and in the discharge of them he met with his death. The wisdom and power with which he preached the Christian faith, excited the anger and jealousy of the leaders of the Jewish synagogues, who accused him of "speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against the law."\* St. Stephen, assisted by direct and visible communications from God, refutes this charge. Out of those very Scriptures which they had used as a handle against him, he proves that Christ, Whom he preached to them, "came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil the law." To do this, he simply takes the history of their fathers as taught and acknowledged by themselves. He shows how, from the time of Abraham, all the dealings of God with them had pointed to the coming of the Saviour. Their laws had prefigured the ordinances of Christ. Their religion had been a preparation for the religion of Christ. Their prophets had been types of Christ. Even that very Moses for whose honour they were contending, spoke of himself only as the forerunner of that greater Prophet to Whom they were to hearken.† (Compare Deut. xviii. 15.) So also of Joshua, and of David, and of all the Prophets who, each in their turn, had been the leaders and saviours of Israel. Persecuted, afflicted, and rejected by their own people,‡ their lives prefigured His Who was

\* Morn. Less. Acts vi. 13.

† Even. Less. Acts vii. 37; ‡ verse 52.

despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. As the types were persecuted, so must He Whom they foreshadowed be persecuted too. Christ's very sufferings then, proved Him to be the "Holy One and the Just" of whom their fathers spake; and they, by inflicting those sufferings, had themselves unconsciously borne witness to the prophecies concerning Him. They had "fulfilled them in condemning Him." It was at this point of St. Stephen's argument, that the rage of his enemies broke loose against him. Convicted by their own consciences, they felt the truth of his words and the wickedness of their own conduct.

But truth, falling upon hardened and impenitent hearts, often only leads men on to greater sin. And so it was in this case. Nothing less would satisfy the fury of those wicked men than the death of him who had thus exposed their crime. They stoned him with stones till he died. But St. Stephen, answering to the description which the lesson for this day gives of the "righteous man," was "bold as a lion."\* He feared not them who were able only to kill the body. After the example of his divine Master, he prayed for his murderers, and when he had so done, he "fell asleep."† Thus in St. Stephen, the first martyr, began the fulfilment of our Saviour's prophecy which we read in the gospel for the day. He was the first among the train of prophets, and wise men, and scribes, whom the Jews, after the coming of Christ, as their fathers did before it, were to scourge, and kill, and cru-

\* Morn. Less. verse 1.    † Epistle, verse 60.

cify;\* and whose blood was so soon to be visited upon their church and nation.

But while Holy Scripture thus gives us so wonderful an account of this first Christian martyrdom, it also reveals to us the hidden cause of the martyr's strength. The light of heaven opened, and Jesus standing at God's right hand† to succour him, were the supports of St. Stephen in his hour of trial. The collect teaches us how a like consolation may be vouchsafed even to ourselves. Our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of Christ's truth, may not indeed be as severe as those of St. Stephen. We may not be called upon to lay down our lives for His sake; but having taken upon ourselves the Cross of Christ, we must all in some way or other bear witness to the faith of Christ.

Others, who have "not so learned Christ" as we have, may unjustly accuse and find fault with us. They may speak evil of that way in which we live, and use without reverence that holy Name which we have been taught to love. We may thus "do well and suffer for it," even at the hands of those who call themselves brethren. By them our words and actions may be misconstrued, and our tempers tried. Such trials then, we see may be the lot of even the humblest and youngest of Christ's little ones. He alone knows to which of them we may be called, and what portion of them we may have to bear. But when He puts them upon us, He gives us, as He did to St. Stephen, the consolations necessary to support us under them. Though we should not now see heaven opened,

\* Gospel, verse 34. † Epistle, (Acts vii.) verse 55.

and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, yet heaven has been as clearly revealed to our faith, as it was to the bodily senses of St. Stephen.

Christ our Lord has Himself told us of its joys, and of the way which leads to them. He has promised that "yet a little while," and we shall "see Him as He is," we shall be with Him and behold His glory. In His holy Word He has assured us that the happiness of that blessed place is beyond what eye hath seen, ear heard, or the heart of man conceived. A Mediator also still lives to conduct us thither. He, Who, as yesterday, came into the world to take upon Him our flesh, still as surely stands at God's right hand, though we see Him not, to succour all them that suffer for Him. "There He ever liveth to make intercession for us," knowing and compassionating even the very smallest trial which we undergo for the love of Him. If only we look up to Him, He will give us grace to love and bless our persecutors, and take all things patiently for His sake. Even in the dark hour of death, He will not leave us nor forsake us. Though He should not disclose Himself visibly to us, yet He will be still with us though unseen; "His rod and His staff, they will comfort us."\*

In these thoughts then, we find our encouragement. We know that when the house of this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we have a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and that our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. All our

\* Psalm xxiii. 4.

trials, afflictions, and persecutions will then appear as nothing when we look forward to the hope which is laid up for us in heaven; for the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall then be revealed in us.

Thus may the example of the great martyr St. Stephen be profitable to us, even in our daily lives. By it, he, being dead, yet speaketh; and for it, we, who still live, have reason to "praise him who is already dead, more than the living who are yet alive."\*

\* See Even. Less. verse 2.

**St. John the Evangelist's Day.**

(DECEMBER 27.)

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*Epistle*, 1 St. John, i. 1.      *Morning Lessons*, Eccles. v.  
Revel. i.

*Gospel*, St. John, xxi. 19.      *Evening Lessons*, Eccles. vi.  
Revel. xxii.

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ST. JOHN, the Apostle and Evangelist whom we commemorate to-day, was "the disciple whom Jesus loved."\* Love or charity is the principle which his writings chiefly inculcate. He speaks to us of the Love of God; and teaches that "as God loved us, so ought we also to love one another."† And by his life, no less than by his words, does he set forth this divine doctrine. He was born of parents, who from his youth up would most probably have trained him in the love of Christ. His father Zebedee was in attendance on our Lord during the early part of His ministry; and Salome, his mother, was amongst those holy women who watched our Saviour at the sepulchre. When St. John first entered the immediate service of his Master is not known; but from the time of his becoming a disciple, he appears to have been honoured with our Lord's intimate confidence. He was the disciple who lay on His breast at the last Supper;‡ he was with Him in His

\* Gospel, verse 20.      † 1 St. John, iv. 11.

‡ St. John, xiii. 25.

agony in the garden, and watched Him expiring on the Cross. He also it was, to whom our Lord committed the care of His mother, the Blessed Virgin, when in His dying moments He beheld her, and "the disciple standing by whom He loved." (St. John xix. 26.) St. John was also amongst the favoured three who beheld the mysteries of our Lord's transfiguration, and who, on the occasion of some of His miracles, were allowed to be with Him when no man else was "suffered to follow Him." (St. Mark, v. 37.) Again, after the Resurrection, he, with his brother St. James and others of the apostles, (St. John, xxi. 2,) is found on the shores of the sea of Tiberias, witnessing the miracle of their divine Master, and listening to His words. He is the subject of the conversation which at this time took place between our Lord and the apostle St. Peter.\* This conversation, which is recorded in the gospel for the day, refers to the future life and death of St. John. The lot of this beloved disciple, was not like that of the other apostles to die a violent death for the faith, but to live on, and tarry the Lord's pleasure. And so we learn from him something of the nature of true devotion, which is not to choose for ourselves in life or in death, but to wait patiently the Lord's good time. The faithful servant of Christ will leave all in His hands, knowing that for those who love God "to live is Christ, to die is gain."

And as St. John was thus the beloved of his Lord, so did he in his turn show his love to his Master. He, with St. Peter, was the first at the sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrec-

\* Gospel, verse 21.



tion, and in the excess of his fervour did outrun even St. Peter himself. Even in his failings, the love of God seems to have been the ruling motive of this apostle, degenerating sometimes into intemperate zeal. The gentle rebuke which he, on three several occasions, (St. Matt. xx. 23; St. Mark, ix. 38; St. Luke, ix. 51;) received from our blessed Lord were given on this account. After the Ascension of our Saviour, St. John abated nothing of his religious love and devotion. Holy Scripture tells us of his labours in the Christian Church, — of the wonderful miracles and conversions, which he, in conjunction with St. Peter, wrought in Christ's name, — and of the stripes, persecutions, and imprisonments, which he, in company with that same apostle, underwent for Christ's sake.

History then, taking up the narrative, speaks of his continued labours for the Christian faith, and of the sufferings which he in consequence underwent at the hand of Domitian, the Roman Emperor, by whose orders he was placed in a cauldron of boiling oil. But it was not God's will that he should die thus. His martyrdom was to be in will, not in deed. He was brought to suffer, but not to die for Christ's sake. The hand of God therefore rescued Him from this danger and preserved his body unharmed from the burning liquid. Banishment was then substituted for torment, and by the same Emperor he was for some years exiled into the isle of Patmos. Before his death, however, he was freed from this punishment likewise; and returning to Ephesus, a town where he had formerly preached, he expired peaceably in a good old age, and his last breath was expended in

calling upon the disciples to "love one another."

But while in St. John's character, we thus trace the nature of divine love, we learn also something of its blessed effects. It was St. John, the Apostle of Love, who was allowed more than any other to penetrate into the mysteries of divine truth; as if to teach us, that love may be permitted to unfold that which knowledge, and even faith, could not attain to. St. John, then, like the eagle, used for his emblem, seems to have been constantly soaring up to heaven in holy contemplation. He possessed the "charity which edifieth," rather than the "knowledge which puffeth up," and so he obtained a nearer insight into the heavenly vision. During his banishment into the isle of Patmos, God vouchsafed to reveal to him "the things which should be hereafter." The Book of Revelations, which he was there inspired to write, and of which the first and last chapters are read to us to-day, contains the purposes of God concerning His Church, both militant and triumphant. It speaks of man's future state in blessedness or punishment, and tells of those things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." To St. John also, we owe the clear view of the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, with which his epistles and gospel abound. From him, especially, as in the epistle for this day, it is that we learn the glorious truth, that the Word was made flesh, and manifested to us, that we, who are in the flesh, might have fellowship with Him, and with the Father.\*

\* Epistle, verses 1—4.

Divine Light, then, we see, was the privilege granted to the fervent love and devoted obedience of the holy apostle St. John. Its bright beams\* shone upon his own path; and through his means, may be reflected upon ours also, if we seek them as the Church would on this day teach us to do. First, we must pray in the words of the collect that the Lord would continue to "cast His bright beams of light upon His Church;" then, each as individual members of the Church, we must severally strive to walk in the light of God's truth towards the "light of everlasting life." To this end, the example of the blessed apostle whom we commemorate to-day, may be our guide. Like him, we must strive to grow in love and in devotion, knowing that light will be granted in proportion to our love. We must trust ourselves, as he did, to God's good providence, believing that He will order what is best for us, and disclose to us His ways, when He sees fit so to do.† Lifting up our thoughts above those "vanities"‡ which are "of the earth, earthy," we must strive, like him, to be ever ascending up towards heaven and heavenly things, and there in "heart and mind continually dwell." If we thus walk in the light as He, "our divine Lord and Master," is in the light, we shall "have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from all sin."|| Our eyes, even those of the most unlearned amongst us, will be "opened to discern the wondrous things of God's law;" "our path will be as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

\* Collect. † Gospel. ‡ See Lessons for the day.  
 || Epistle, verse 7.

## The Innocents' Dan.

(DECEMBER 28.)

*For the Epistle, Rev. xiv. 1. Morning Lesson, Jer. xxxi.  
to verse 18.  
Gospel, St. Matt. ii. 13. Evening Lesson, Wisd. i.*

NEXT in order to the festivals of St. Stephen and St. John, we commemorate that of the holy Innocents. These blessed infants, who unconsciously yielded up their lives to the Saviour, have a place assigned to them with him who died and him who was willing to die for Christ's sake. Thus martyrdom, love, and innocence unite to glorify the Redeemer of mankind.

The gospel for the day relates the circumstances which gave rise to the murder of these infant martyrs. Herod, King of Judea, hearing that One would shortly be born Who should be called "King of the Jews," feared for his throne and kingdom. Bethlehem, being the reported birth-place of this infant rival, he ordered the destruction of the children of that town, from two years old and under. But this order, coming from man alone, could not affect the eternal decrees of God. An angel from heaven forewarned the parents of our blessed Saviour of the approaching danger, and the Son of God was saved by flight. Thus, by the

over-ruling providence of God, He Whom alone Herod sought to kill, was the only one saved from destruction, while all the other Bethlehemite infants were put to the edge of the sword.

But while the world sees in this event nothing but the history of a cruel massacre, the holy Evangelist discloses its spiritual meaning, and shows how by it was accomplished an ancient prophecy of God.\* To this prophecy, therefore, quoted by St. Matthew, the first lesson for this morning turns our thoughts. Rachel, weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted,† while in part it refers to Jerusalem weeping over her fallen people, also prophetically describes the sorrow of those Jewish mothers, who wept over their dying little ones. In neither case, however, would they weep as those without hope; as we are led to infer from the words which follow. Calling upon the mourners to "refrain their voice from weeping, and their eyes from tears," the prophet therein reminds them that there is "hope in the end" of those for whom they mourn, for that they were to return again from the land of the enemy into their own border.‡ The children of Jerusalem were to be restored to their own land, and the spirits of these infants into the hand of God Who gave them. Washed and cleansed in the blood of Him for Whom they suffered, these innocent martyrs were accepted in their purity, and were found without fault before the throne of God. "In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but

\* Gospel, verse 17. † Morn. Less. verse 15;

‡ verses 16, 17.

their end was in peace." In these blessed infants, then, we may further see a type of all those baptized souls whom God redeems from the "land of the enemy" to bring them into the Christian Church as into "His own border." Washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, they are redeemed from among men, and have the Father's Name written in their foreheads;\* they therefore, dying in their baptismal innocence, would have a place amongst that blessed company of whom we read in the Scripture for this day's epistle.

But while we contemplate the happiness of these blessed infants, and rejoice in their blessedness, we must also learn to "follow their innocency."† This is what our Saviour has taught us, and what the Church on this day leads us to do,—when in the collect for the day, she would teach us how all men, by the "innocency of their lives, and constancy of their faith, may glorify God's holy Name."‡ The mind of the newly baptized infant who has just received the image of Christ, is set before us, as a pattern to all Christians of every age and state. Children hence learn in what a true child-like temper consists. They are taught that to be "innocents" in deed, and not in name only, they must strive to preserve that holy state in which their baptism placed them. Driving far from them all evil thoughts and wicked passions, they must strive to imitate these little ones in their purity, holiness, and placid submission. Thus will God vouchsafe to accept their services, and be honoured by

\* Epistle, verse 1. † Baptismal Service.

‡ Collect.

their praises. Likewise older persons may learn from them the practice of humility, teachableness, and perfect obedience. They will be led to "remove from thoughts that are without understanding," knowing that "the holy spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in."\* If we thus share the purity of innocents, we may also hope to share their blessedness. Redeemed as they were by the blood of the Lamb, we may for His sake be found guiltless before God, and with them learn to sing the new song, which no man could learn but the hundred and forty and four thousand which are before the throne.† Being converted and made as little children, we may, with little children, inherit the kingdom of God.‡

\* Even. Less. verse 5. † Epistle, verse 3.

‡ St. Matt. xviii. 3.

## The Conversion of St. Paul.

(JANUARY 25.)

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*For the Epistle, Acts ix. 1. Morning Lessons, Wisd. v.  
Acts xxii. to verse 22.*  
*The Gospel, St. Matt. xix. 27. Evening Lessons, Wisd. vi.  
Acts xxvi.*

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THE chief feature in St. Paul's history is his conversion. This, therefore, is the subject which the Church brings before us on the day sacred to his memory. Instead of commemorating, according to her practice on other saints' days, the birth or death of this great Apostle, she remembers his conversion as the event of his life by which God's grace was most magnified, and our salvation most advanced.

The whole history of this great miracle is related to us in those portions of Scripture selected as the epistle and proper lessons for this day; and the other parts of the service teach us how to make it profitable to ourselves.

St. Paul, originally called Saul, was by birth and education a Jew, and of the Pharisees, one of their strictest sects. Born of Jewish parents, and brought up at Jerusalem under Gamaliel, he had been carefully instructed in the law of the fathers, and was "zealous towards God,"\* in that faith in which he had

\* 2nd Morn. Less. verse 3.



been trained. He served Jehovah, but had not yet learned to know and to adore the Messiah, Jesus Christ ; therefore, he "thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."\* Thus we find him taking part in the murder of St. Stephen, and then, strengthened by legal authority, we see him setting forth to persecute and destroy the followers of Christ, (Acts ix.) But the prayer of the first Christian martyr had gone up before the throne of God, — and this very Saul was its first fruits. God looked down from heaven, and had mercy upon him because he sinned "ignorantly and in unbelief," (1 Tim. i. 13.) By a sudden and miraculous vision from heaven, the Lord stops his mistaken course,† shows unto him the good and the right way, and converts him at once from an enemy into a devoted servant and follower of Christ. From henceforth the zeal and earnestness and fervour which he had expended in the cause of error are devoted to the cause of truth, and he becomes a preacher of the "faith which once he destroyed," (Gal. i. 23.) Neither the false accusations of former associates, nor the suspicions of his new brethren, could draw him from the straight and narrow path which was marked out for him. He preached the Word in season and out of season, in labours, and stripes, and imprisonments, in weariness, perils, and watchings. None of these things moved him, neither counted he his life dear unto himself. Undaunted in the presence of kings and governors, he witnessed before them a good confession. "Almost he persuaded Agrippa to be

\* Second Even. Less. verse 9. † Epistle, verse 3.

a Christian;”\* and in the reign of the Emperor Nero, when he had fought a good fight and finished his course, he cheerfully laid down his life for Christ’s sake, being beheaded at Rome by order of that emperor, in the year 67.

Thus by the wonderful power of the grace of God, Saul, the Jewish persecutor, was changed into the Christian martyr and apostle St. Paul. He who was before “a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious, became a pattern to all them that believe,” (1 Tim. i. 13—16.) As a chosen vessel of God, to him was entrusted the important task of bearing witness before Gentiles and kings,† and the children of Israel.”‡ In this, therefore, do we see realized, in a wonderful manner, that character of the “righteous man” which is described to us in the first lesson for this morning.|| Fools did indeed account his life madness,§ and his end to be without honour. His enemies were troubled with terrible fear, and were amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for.¶ But he was numbered with the children of God, and his lot is among the saints.\*\* Henceforth there is laid up for him a “beautiful”†† crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him at the last day. In this history, then, we learn to adore the mighty power of God’s grace, and to realize the truth of our Saviour’s words, when He tells us in this day’s gospel that “they

\* Second Even. Less. verse 28. † See First Even. Less. (Wisd. vi.) ‡ Epistle, (Acts ix. 15;) || verse 1; § verse 4; compare Second Even. Less. (Acts xxvi. 24;) ¶ verse 2; \*\* verse 5; †† verse 16; (comp. 2 Tim. ii. 8.)

that are last shall be first, and the first last.”\* These words were originally spoken, as is supposed, with reference to the twelve apostles, and the thrones prepared for them in heaven : but the meaning which they contain may be applicable to all, both in their time and ours. They teach us that our eternal safety depends not so much on the light we possess as on the measure in which we act up to it. St. Paul, the “very least of all saints,” became “in no whit behind the very chiefest apostles,” (Eph. iii. 8 ; 2 Cor. xi. 5,) while we, who are amongst the first in light and privileges, may be last in faith and obedience. This, therefore, is the point to which the Church would lead us on this day. While she leaves us to adore in silence the wonderful ways of God, with regard to those who, like the Jewish persecutor Saul, have not received the light, she gathers from this festival the lesson most profitable to our own souls. Through the conversion and preaching of the holy apostle St. Paul, we have received the light which he, in his days of error, had not.† By his means, God has commanded the light of His glorious gospel to shine through the world; for he it is who was sent to “open our eyes, to turn us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”‡ We have his example for our imitation, and his holy doctrine for our instruction. Such being the benefits brought to us by the conversion of St. Paul, let us strive to “show forth our thankfulness for the same,”§ in the way the Church would teach us. When we read his epistles, let us read,

\* Gospel, verse 40. † Collect. ‡ 2nd Even. Less.  
verse 18. § Collect.

mark, and learn them, with more care than we have hitherto done, and strive to follow the holy doctrine taught to us therein. While “we have the light, let us walk as children of the light, lest darkness come upon us;” for “to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

## The Presentation of Christ in the Temple,

COMMONLY CALLED THE PURIFICATION  
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

(FEBRUARY 2.)

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*Epistle*, Malachi, iii. 1.      *Morning Lesson*, Wisdom ix.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, ii. 22.      *Evening Lesson*, Wisdom xii.

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THIS season of the year constantly brings to our minds the union of the divine and human natures in our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Christmas and Epiphany have set Him before us as "God, of the substance of His Father, begotten before the world; and Man, of the substance of His Mother, born in the world." So also on this day: as a little Child, born of Jewish parents, He is presented in the temple to fulfil the custom of the law: as God, the faithful there worship and adore Him; they see in this His simple action the fulfilment of their hopes, and the accomplishment of a glorious prophecy.

A reference to the Jewish law will teach us the occasion of this day's festival. God, as we know from the Old Testament history, had exempted the first-born of the Israelites from the destruction, which at the time of their deliverance out of Egypt He had brought upon

the first-born of the Egyptians. "With great deliberation He had punished the enemies of His children, while with circumspection He judged His own sons, unto whose fathers He had sworn, and made covenants of good promises."\* In remembrance, therefore, of this His great mercy, He had commanded that the first-born amongst the Israelites, both man and beast, should be dedicated to Himself. (Exod. xiii. 2, 15.) Even though afterwards the Levites were taken as God's own possession instead of the first-born, (Lev. xiii. 15-18,) yet still the first-born continued to be solemnly presented to God in the temple at a certain time after their birth, together with a sum of money for their redemption; (Numb. xviii. 16;) on this occasion, it was also customary for the mother to offer the usual sacrifices for the ceremony of her purification. No such ceremony, indeed, was required after the birth of Him Who knew no sin; yet as Christ our Saviour came to fulfil all righteousness, so His mother Mary (when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished) came to offer the usual sacrifices of a pair of turtle-doves, and two small pigeons, at which time our Lord Himself was presented in the temple in substance of our flesh.†

Such were the circumstances which drew together the holy group whose assemblage in the temple is described in the gospel for the day. To ordinary eyes there would appear in them nothing more than would occur at the birth of any Jewish infant; but there were those who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Simeon,

\* Even. Less. verses 19, 20. † Gospel, verse 22.

a just and devout man, waited for the consolation of Israel, and Anna, the aged prophetess, departed not from the temple, but served God in fastings and prayers night and day. Their eyes, then, were opened to discern the wondrous things of God. It was their privilege, as it is ours also, to behold in this humble Child the great and mighty God, and to see in the events of this day, how those words spoken by the prophet Malachi began to be fulfilled.\* The Lord had come to His temple, and that suddenly. He was come to purify and refine the hearts of men by the preaching of His doctrine and the power of His grace. According as they received or rejected His doctrine, they were to be saved or condemned; therefore is His coming said to be for the fall or rising again of many in Israel.† A Saviour to those who believed in Him, He would prove a Judge to such as continued in their sins and feared not Him, said the Lord of Hosts.‡ In His Person also were to be fulfilled all those types and ceremonies by which the old law, in the former temple, had prefigured His coming. Well, therefore, may the glory of the latter house which thus received the Saviour, (Haggai, ii. 9,) be declared greater than that of the former house, which only foreshadowed Him; and well might Simeon be ready to depart in peace, now that he had welcomed the Saviour of the world, and seen the Lord's Christ!||

We see, then, that in this action of our Lord, there is a higher and deeper meaning than the mere fulfilling of the outward law. To under-

\* Epistle, verse 1.    † Gospel, verse 34.    ‡ Epistle, verse 5.    || Gospel, verse 29.

stand this meaning, and how to profit by it, we must again refer to the law of Moses for our instruction. The deliverance of the Israelites was to be obtained by the offering of the first-born ; so was also that of Christians, the Israelites of God, of which the other deliverance was but a type. Christ, the first-born among many brethren, "is He Who has performed this work for us." In this, as in all other things, He has "fulfilled the law for us," and redeemed us from its curse. Of this, His presentation this day in the temple is to us a pledge. By it we are assured, that we who have a part in the benefits of Christ's Blood, need no longer be redeemed with contemptible things as silver and gold. (1 St. Peter, i. 18.) Of us, it is required rather that we should offer up ourselves, our bodies, souls, and spirits, a lively sacrifice unto Him, purifying ourselves even as He is pure.

This is the practical lesson which the Church would draw from the events of this day. Our hearts are now as temples where Christ makes His abode. He Who was this day presented in the temple in substance of our flesh, condescends to dwell in us by faith, except we be reprobates. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) Our aim, then, should be to keep these temples holy, so that the Lord may always there inhabit. To this end, the instruction and examples which we meet with this day, will be an especial help and guidance. In the first lesson for this morning, we read how Solomon prayed for the wisdom of God to direct him in the building of God's holy temple. Still more do we need the heavenly wisdom of the grace of God, to train and keep our hearts, the spiritual temples of the living God. "The



thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices but uncertain. The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things."\* Like Solomon, then, we must pray that God would send this divine wisdom out of His holy heaven and from the throne of His glory, that "she may lead us soberly in her doings, and preserve us in her power."† Like Simeon and Anna, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, we must wait on the Lord continually in His temple and in His ordinances, as not knowing at what hour He may come. As His first coming was "suddenly, in an instant," so also shall His second be; and as at His first coming, the two or three gathered together in the temple find the Saviour, while the careless would miss Him, so also shall it be again. From this thought, then, may we take warning. May we learn from it the danger of neglecting any service or ordinance in which Christ is present, for by so doing we may miss the privilege which Simeon and Anna found. Still following the teaching of the Church on this day, may we be led, so to pray, and watch, and purify ourselves that, however sudden His return may be, we may with pure and clean hearts be presented unto Him‡ in His holy temple above; for to the pure in heart it is promised that "they shall see God."

\* Even. Less. verse 8, &c. † verses 10, 11.

‡ Collect.

## St. Matthias's Day.

(FEBRUARY 24.)

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*Epistle*, Acts i. 15.

*Gospel*, St. Matt. xi. 25.

*Morning Lesson*, Wisdom xix.

*Evening Lesson*, Eccclus. i.

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ST. MATTHIAS was the apostle appointed to fill the place of the traitor Judas. On this day, then, we commemorate the fall as well as the election of an apostle, and we draw from these events a lesson and a warning.

Of the early history of St. Matthias very little is known, but he is generally supposed to have been one of the seventy disciples. Holy Scripture first brings him before us in that portion of the Acts which is read to us to-day. In this passage it is related how he came to be called to the vacant apostolate, and how God chose him to Himself by lot.\* After the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, St. Matthias, like the other apostles, had his portion of labour assigned to him, and after diligently preaching the Word in the eastern provinces, suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, where he is believed to have died on a cross. St. Matthias, then, gained the crown which Judas by his transgression lost. This is the point to

\* Epistle, verse 26.

which the services for this day would turn our thoughts. The collect reminds us that it was "in the room of the traitor Judas that St. Matthias was called to be of the number of the twelve apostles," and the Scripture read as the epistle tells us how it came to pass. But to enter into the circumstances of this awful event, we must call to mind the manner in which our Lord has ordained and constituted His Church. Our blessed Saviour, during the time of His ministry had called unto Him twelve disciples whom He named apostles. These did Christ ordain to be with Him and to preach the gospel; and at His ascension He left them all power in heaven and in earth to teach and baptize all nations, promising to be with them always even unto the end of the world. (St. Matthew, xxviii. 18, 19.) The power which the apostles thus received was not however to die with themselves. They were "to commit it unto faithful men, who should be able likewise to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) Such are the means which God has chosen to plant and keep alive amongst ourselves up to the present time the truths of the gospel, and the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. As the church of Israel was composed of twelve tribes, and headed by twelve patriarchs, so after the same model the Christian church was to have twelve foundation-stones, and these foundations were the twelve apostles of the Lamb, (Rev. xxi. 14,) for whom twelve thrones were to be prepared in heaven. (St. Matthew, xix. 28.) Thus was the church of God built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; (Eph. ii. 20;) thus

it stands among us now as the pillar and ground of the truth, (1 Tim. iii. 15,) and the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it. (St. Matthew, xvi. 18.)

This holy society or body has been protected and defended by God, just as the church of Israel was of old. In the midst of enemies who persecuted, afflicted and tormented them, His people were defended by His hand, and "passed a wonderful way, for the Lord did not lightly regard them, but did assist them in every time and place."\* But the Almighty is pleased to work great ends by weak and fallible instruments. In forming His church, He would not that many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble should be called. He "from Whom alone all wisdom cometh,"† chose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. According to His own words in the gospel for the day, He hid the deep things of His kingdom from the wise and prudent, to reveal them unto babes.‡ He selected for His apostles twelve poor and unlearned men, whom He entrusted with His message of mercy, and to whom He gave commission to preach the gospel to all mankind. Of these the traitor Judas was one. He, who had "been numbered with the apostles, and obtained part of their ministry,"§ fell through the temptation of covetousness, and betrayed his Lord for gain. "Because he came not in truth to fear the Lord, but his heart was full of deceit, he fell and was cast down in the

\* Morn. Less. verses 5, 22. † Even. Less. verse 1.

‡ Gospel, verse 25.

§ Epistle, verse 17.

midst of the congregation.”\* God’s purposes, however, with regard to His church could not fail. Though the instruments who were to accomplish them might fall away, yet others were not wanting to fill their place. The ministry and apostleship which belonged to Judas, and consequently the throne which appertained to them, were by the appointment of God transferred from him to St. Matthias. Thus the twelve pillars of God’s church remained complete, though one who had at first been called to compose it was taken away. Such has ever been the rule in the dealings of God with His people. When the Jews proved themselves unworthy of their privileges, the Lord from henceforth turned to the Gentiles. When Saul incurred God’s displeasure through disobedience, his kingdom was given to David. When the churches founded by the apostles grew lukewarm or cold, they were transplanted into other nations more worthy of the blessing. That such is still the case, is a lesson which all may this day take occasion to learn. God has planted among us a holy church, and for each member of that church He has prepared a place in heaven; but it rests with us whether we will fill that place or no. Our branch of the church may through our sins be taken from us, and given to a nation who will bring forth the fruits thereof,—as the crown prepared for each of us in heaven, may be given to another who is better than ourselves. As a church, then, we must offer up our united prayers that God would preserve us from false apostles, and that we may be ordered and guided by faithful and

\* Even. Less. verse 30.

true pastors.\* As individuals, we must each watch against our besetting sin, whether it be covetousness or any other temptation, lest like Judas, we fall, and miss the heavenly place prepared for us. Thus the very sense of our privileges will make us "not high-minded but fear." (Rom. xi. 20.) It will be a warning to us to "hold fast that which we have, lest another take our crown," (Rev. iii. 11,) and to remember that "whosoever standeth must take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.)

\* Collect.

## The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

(MARCH 25.)

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*Epistle*, Isaiah, vii. 10.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, i. 26.

*Morning Lesson*, Eccclus. ii.  
*Evening Lesson*, Eccclus. iii.

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THE announcement of our blessed Saviour's birth in the flesh is the event which we commemorate to-day.

To-day, therefore, we meditate on the mystery of our Lord's incarnation. We recall the circumstances connected with it, and we learn the lessons to be derived therefrom. Upon this great truth it is that the hopes of all mankind have rested ever since Adam's fall. Man had sinned and could not make atonement for his sin. That must be the work of God Himself; and this work was accomplished when the Son of God came in the likeness of sinful flesh to suffer and die in our stead, and for our salvation. The accomplishment of this wonderful redemption begins with the events of this day.

When, in the fulness of time, the great God of heaven and earth condescended to unite His divine with our human nature, He was born into the world "in fashion as a man," and chose a humble virgin for His mother. Thus, in some

mysterious way, which though we cannot understand we must devoutly believe, He Who was perfect God became also perfect man—God, of the substance of His Father begotten before the world, and man of the substance of His mother born in the world. It was to announce this great event that an angel was on this day sent to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord.\* On this day, therefore, was fulfilled that which Isaiah had foretold in the Scripture appointed for this day's epistle. This prophecy was spoken by Isaiah in the time of Ahaz, under the following circumstances. God, seeing the people of Judah suffering by the attacks of Syria and Israel, graciously sent His prophet to comfort them in their distress by foretelling the downfall of these two powers. (Isa. vii. 7–10.) Ahaz, the wicked and unbelieving king, refused to give credit to his words. Isaiah, inspired by God, then goes on to prove the Almighty's power, by speaking of a far higher deliverance than that of the mere Jewish nation—even the deliverance of the world by the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.† Thus more than seven hundred years before the coming of our blessed Saviour, are the circumstances of His birth distinctly foretold. God was His Father. A virgin was His mother. Himself, in His own sacred Person, He was Immanuel, "God with us,"—God and Man joined together in one Person. In His divine nature truly God, but partaking in His human nature of the pains and sorrows and infirmities of mankind.

The epistle having thus proclaimed to us the

\* See Gospel. † Epistle, verse 14.



glorious prophecy of Christ's incarnation, the gospel for the day relates how it was fulfilled ; disclosing to us at the same time something of the character of her who was the instrument of its fulfilment. The holy person chosen to be the mother of our Lord, was a humble virgin of the tribe of Judah. Living retired and little esteemed in the eyes of the world, she "went on her business with meekness,"\* ignorant of the high honour which was in store for her. But God, as the wise man tells us in this day's lesson, "reveals His mysteries unto the meek," and "is honoured of the lowly,"† and such were the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her humility caused her to be troubled at the salutation of the angel, and at the glorious tidings which he brought her.‡ By her belief in the miracle which was above her understanding she shewed her faith ; while her ready compliance that the will of God should be wrought in her proved her perfect submission and obedience.¶ Thus she who was "lowly in her own eyes," had the unspeakable honour of bringing into the world the Son of the Highest, the King of God's spiritual Israel, of Whose kingdom there should be no end.§ Therefore do we commemorate her, as the church on this day bids us, amongst the glorified saints of God ; we think of her with reverence as the instrument through which God accomplished His wonderful purposes to man, and to all generations we call her "blessed." (St. Luke, i. 48.)

But lest the holiness of the mother should lead us off from contemplating the divine cha-

\* Even. Less. verse 17 ; † verses 19, 20. ‡ Gospel, verse 29 ; ¶ verse 38 ; § verses 32, 33.

rafter of the Son, the collect recalls our thoughts to the great subject of this day's festival. It sets before us the doctrine of the incarnation as a truth which is to influence our practice as well as to exercise our faith. To understand this we must remember that it was to sanctify our sinful nature and unite it to His divine nature that Christ took upon Him our flesh. Of such a union it is the privilege of every baptized Christian to partake. Every one who has been baptized into Christ has "put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.) He has been made a "member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." (Eph. v. 30.) We therefore who have been so "joined to the Lord," (1 Cor. vi. 17,) must strive to live in the spirit, the life which He led in the flesh. We must follow the example of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and be made like unto Him, that as He died and rose again for us, so we who have been baptized must die unto sin and rise again unto newness of life. (Baptismal Service.) We must be crucified with Him, and as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, so should we "arm ourselves likewise with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." (1 St. Peter, iv. 1.) This was the meaning of the Church when she signed us with the sign of the Cross, "in token that we should not hereafter be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but manfully to fight under His banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil;" and it would also seem to be her meaning when she mingles the thought of Christ's cross and passion with the doctrine of His incarnation.

We see, then, on this day, how this high and

mysterious doctrine may be brought to influence the daily lives even of Christ's youngest members. We are taught that "if we come to serve the Lord," we must "prepare our souls for the temptations"\* and trials which the cross of Christ lays upon us, and that if we would be made partakers of His divine nature, we must be ready to deny ourselves and mortify the evil habits of our own corrupt nature. We are reminded that we must "suffer with Christ," if we would also "reign with Him;"—we must follow Him now in His cross and passion, if we would benefit by His incarnation, and attain unto the glories of His resurrection.†

\* See Even. Less.    † Collect.

**St. Mark's Day.\***

(APRIL 25.)

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*Epistle*, Ephesians iv. 7.      *Morning Lesson*, Ecclus. iv.  
*Gospel*, St. John xv. 1.      *Evening Lesson*, Ecclus. v.

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ST. MARK, the evangelist, was the friend and companion of the apostle St. Peter. He travelled with and attended upon him, and from his words gathered up the sacred narrative contained in the gospel which goes by his name. This gospel, therefore, though due to the pen of St. Mark, rests on the authority of St. Peter. He wrote it for the benefit of those Christians at Rome, who having been converted by the preaching of St. Peter, wished for some written record of the blessed truths taught them by that apostle,—and so it has been preserved to instruct and enlighten the church of Christ up to this day.

Having completed his gospel, St. Mark travelled to Alexandria in Egypt, of which place he was the first bishop. After extending his

\* St. Mark, the evangelist, is often supposed to be the same as John Mark, mentioned in the Acts. As, however, the services for this day do not mention any circumstances connected with the latter, it seems more in accordance with the "Church's teaching" not to identify him with the evangelist.

Christian labours over several provinces in the north of Africa, he returned to Alexandria, where, about Easter, he suffered martyrdom at the hands of the idolatrous people there. Out of zeal for the false god, to whom they were at that season paying extraordinary honours, they seized St. Mark while he was officiating in church, and put him to a violent and torturing death.

So few certain particulars being left on record of the life and character of St. Mark, the church rather leads our thoughts on this day from the evangelist himself, to the gospel which he wrote. She teaches us to bless God for this precious gift, and shews us how we may most profitably receive and use it.

The blessed gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is a heavenly treasure which God has vouchsafed to man. It declares to us the glad tidings of eternal life, and points to the living way which leads thereto. Nevertheless, such is the ignorance and frailty of human nature, that even this precious gift may be abused. Some things there are in it, "hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable may wrest," as they do the other Scriptures "to their own destruction." (2 St. Peter, iii. 16.) God, therefore, in bestowing upon us His gospel, has provided us also with a guide to interpret and explain it. Such a guide is His holy Church. This, it seems, is what we may gather from the services appointed for this day. While the collect speaks of the heavenly doctrine\* with which God has enlightened His Church, the epistle points to the Church as the means

\* Collect.

and channel through which this doctrine has been preserved to us;\* the lessons exhort us to continue in the truth, while the gospel shews us how each member of the Church may bring forth fruit according to his privileges. To frame and constitute His holy Church was our Lord's work on earth, during these forty days which we are now commemorating,—and after His ascension He remained present with it, though unseen, to guide and direct it into all truth, and preserve it in the same. He placed in it apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.\* Evangelists were inspired to write the account of our Saviour's life upon earth, to record the doctrine which He taught, and tell us of the salvation which He perfected. Apostles, prophets, and teachers were appointed to gather up these sacred truths, to deliver them to us, as our Lord Himself had delivered them to the apostles, and thus to "establish us in the truths of His holy gospel."† The Church, then, is to us a "witness and keeper of holy writ." She instructs her spiritual children as a mother would train and instruct her child. Just as the mother would take care that the child should study the whole of any subject necessary for him to know, not allowing him to retain one part and reject another at his own pleasure—so does the church deal with us. Looking upon all doctrines of Holy Scripture as profitable for our salvation, she would take heed that they all should be brought before us severally and in their turn. While, therefore,

\* Epistle, verses 11, 12. † Collect.

she puts into our hands the Holy Scriptures for our study and meditation, she provides us in her creeds and services with a form of sound words to sum up and explain the doctrines which they contain; that as the heavenly truths of the gospel were received and taught by the apostles, so they may be received and taught amongst us by their successors even now.

The Church, thus enlightened and instructed by the holy gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may well be compared to a Body of which Christ is the Head\*—its members to branches of Christ the true Vine. Being “all perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment,” (1 Cor. i. 10,) they are all taught the same truths, they all “speak the same thing,” they all grow up together in the unity of the same faith.† To illustrate this more fully, we have but to turn to the image of the vine brought before us by our Lord, in the gospel for the day. We know that the branches of a vine only continue to bear fruit and thrive so long as they continue joined to the tree on which they have grown, strengthened by the same root, and nourished by the same sap. So also is it with Christians. Only so long as we remain planted in the faith of God’s holy Church, and established in the truths of His holy gospel, can we hope to continue faithful living members of His blessed Son; then we abide in Him and His words abide in us, and herein is our Father glorified, that we bear much fruit, so shall we be His disciples.‡

Having thus received “the truth as it is in

\* Epistle, verses 12, 13; † verse 13.

‡ Gospel, verses 7, 8.

Jesus," we are exhorted to continue in the faith, grounded and settled; not being moved away from the hope of the gospel, (Col. i. 23,) by the sleight and cunning craftiness of men,\* we must "hold fast the form of sound" words (2 Tim. i. 13) taught us by the Church, lest, giving heed to any other doctrine, we lose the pure gospel teaching which our Lord had provided for us. The collect, therefore, warns us not to be "carried about like children with every blast of vain doctrine;" and in the lessons we are taught to "strive for the truth unto death, and the Lord shall fight for us,"† to "winnow not with every wind, and go not into every way, but to be steadfast in our understanding, and let our words be the same,"—to be "swift to hear, and let our lives be sincere, and with patience give answer."‡ Thus by the holiness of his life and constancy of his faith, even unto death, may each individual Christian be earnestly though silently "contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints."

We learn, then, on this day's festival, how to make a profitable use of God's holy gospel, whether delivered to us by St. Mark or any other evangelist; as members of Christ's body we must humbly and teachably study it, as it has come down to us in the Church from Christ our divine Head.¶ As living branches of God's true Vine, we must "hear the Word and keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."§ (St. Luke, viii. 15.)

\* Epistle, verse 14. † Morn. Less. verse 28. ‡ Even. Less. verses 9-12. ¶ Epistle. § Gospel.



## St. Philip and St. James's Day.

(MAY 1.)

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| <i>Epistle</i> , St. James, i. 1. | <i>Morning Lessons</i> , Eccclus. vii.; St. John, i. 43. |
| <i>Gospel</i> , St. John, xiv. 1. | <i>Evening Lesson</i> , Eccclus. ix.                     |

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THE two holy men whose memories the Church celebrates to-day, are associated together in no other point than as being both apostles, and both sent to shew unto us the way of salvation. But, though not peculiarly connected in the eyes of men, their common interest in this great work would join them together in God's sight; and so we commemorate them together on this day as the Church directs, and learn the lesson which both united to teach.

The second lesson for this morning tells us that St. Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. On him was conferred the honour of being the first-called disciple; for though St. Andrew and St. Peter had previously found Christ, St. Philip was the first who remained with Him as a disciple. Of his character we know very little, except from those few notices which occur in the Holy Scriptures. From them we may gather, that though in St. Philip himself there was a natural slowness to perceive the mysteries of divine truth, yet he

made the most of that which he did know by his eagerness in communicating it to others. He was "wise" to win souls to Christ. His first act was to find Nathaniel and tell him that he had "found Him of Whom the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."\* Again we have a proof of this tenderness for the souls of others, in his dealings with those Greeks who came up to worship at the feast. It was to St. Philip they applied for the privilege of seeing Jesus; and St. Philip, in conjunction with St. Andrew, brought them under the notice of our Lord. (St. John, xii. 20-23.) Of the other point in St. Philip's character only two instances are recorded in the gospels. The first is on the occasion of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, when he seems to have been looking more to human than to divine means, and so implying a doubt of our Saviour's miraculous power. (St. John, vi. 7.) The second is contained in the request made by him to our Lord (in the gospel for this day) that He would "shew him the Father,"†—as if he were ignorant of the truth that he "who had seen the Son, the same had seen the Father also."‡ But this weakness in the apostle's faith only seems to have made him the more especial object of our Saviour's care. By His mild and gentle teaching, our Lord strengthened and confirmed him, and led him onwards in the right way. After the ascension of our Saviour, he preached the Word in upper Asia, and at length suffered martyrdom at Hierapolis, a city of Asia Minor, where he was nailed to a cross, and stoned to death.

\* Morn. Less. verse 45; † verse 8; ‡ verse 9.

St. James, the son of Alpheus or Cleophas, was the brother, or more properly the near kinsman of our Lord. He is surnamed "the less," or sometimes "the just," to distinguish him from St. James the great, the brother of St. John. The scene of his labours was Jerusalem, he being appointed bishop of that place, the year after the passion of our Lord. Here he presided over the council which regulated the affairs of the church; here he lived in the constant practice of fervent piety and devotion, and here he at length died for the faith of Christ. The commands of the high priest that he should renounce Christianity, having made him so much the more vehement in defending and upholding it, he was by the command of the same high priest thrown down from the battlements of the city, and then killed by the blow of a club.

Thus did these two holy apostles bear separate witness to the faith. Thus did they both learn to know Christ, and to "walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life."\* Let us see, according to the teaching of this day's collect, that we "follow their steps."\* Our Lord Himself has told us that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life," (St. Matthew, vii. 14;) so also St. James in his epistle teaches us. Especially in that portion of it which we read to-day, he impresses upon us how many and great are the trials of a Christian's life. We are going, as it were, "in the midst of snares, walking on the battlements of a city."† But these temptations may be a means of advancing us in the way that leadeth

\* Collect. † Even. Less. verse 13.

to everlasting life ; they may secure to us the "crown of life which God hath promised to them that love Him."\* God, Who sees that prosperity may cause a man to "fade away in his works,"† suits our trials as will best profit us, and they will "have their perfect work," if only we use them rightly, walking through them as God would have us, and as the services on this day would lead us to do.

The lessons teach us how to do our duty in that state of life in which it hath pleased God to call us, watching against every snare which may meet us by the way. St. James, in his epistle, sets before us the duty and privilege of prayer, as the only safeguard in the midst of difficulties.‡ He who was himself a man of prayer, would have us use the means by which he was enabled to overcome and endure. Only he would warn us to pray in faith and with our whole heart, neither turning aside to the right hand or to the left. He would teach us not to waver nor be fainthearted, lest "we should receive nothing of the Lord."||

But neither our prayers nor watchings will avail us anything, except through Him Who is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life."§ To Him the gospel points as our only means of entrance into the mansions prepared for us in heaven. To "know Him,"¶ then, must be our first and only care, if we would walk safely "through the waves of this troublesome world towards the land of everlasting life." He is "the new and living Way which has been conse-

\* Epistle, verse 12: † verse 11; ‡ verses 5, 6;

|| verses 6, 7; and 1st Morn. Less. verse 10.

§ Gospel, verse 6; ¶ verse 7.

crated for us," (Heb. x. 20,) and "no man cometh unto the Father but by Him;"\* therefore by resting on His merits all our hope, by asking all things in His Name, and walking in the strait and narrow way which He points out, we shall know Him to be "the Way." He sent His Spirit to guide us into all truth, (St. John, xvi. 13;) therefore, by following in all things the motions of that blessed Spirit, we shall know Him to be "the Truth," according to His own promise, that "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." (St. John, vii. 17.) He also it is through Whom God hath given to us eternal life, for "he that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 St. John, v. 12.) So long then as "He dwelleth in us," and we in Him, through the means which God hath given us, we may know Him to be indeed "our life."

Thus to "know God," may be the privilege of each one of us, even though we have not, like St. Philip, seen Him in the flesh. Thus to know Him is the way that leadeth to everlasting life,† for "this is life eternal, that we may know Him the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent." (St. John, xvii. 3.)

\* Gospel, verse 6. † Collect.

**St. Barnabas's Day.**

(JUNE 11.)

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*Epistle*, Acts, xi. 22.      *Morning Lessons*, Ecclus. x.;  
Acts, xiv.  
*Gospel*, St. John, xv. 12.   *Evening Lessons*, Ecclus. xii.  
Acts xv. to verse 36.

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THE very name of the Apostle whom we commemorate to-day gives us an insight into his character, for *Barnabas* signifies "The Son of Consolation," (Acts iv. 36.) He was, as St. Luke also tells us, "a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."\* In him, therefore, were united the graces of Christian kindness, compassion, and goodness of heart. This we may gather from his history as recorded in holy Scripture, more particularly in those passages which the Church brings under our notice this day.

St. Barnabas was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, (Acts iv. 36,) and as such able to hold possessions which one of his tribe could not have retained in Judea. But these possessions were soon renounced for the common good. His name is foremost among those, who in the early ages of the Church, "having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apos-

\* Epistle, verse 24.

bles feet," (verse 37.) Thus the first act recorded of him is one of self-sacrifice and generosity. St. Barnabas's next deed of kindness was the protection afforded to St. Paul after his conversion. The disciples feared to join themselves to one who had so lately been a persecutor of the Church of Christ. They believed not that he was a disciple, (Acts, ix. 26.) But, convinced of the truth of his conversion, St. Barnabas took him, and so persuaded the apostles of his sincerity, that from henceforth, "he was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem," (verse 28.)

The epistle for this day tells us, how at a later period St. Barnabas was again engaged in other labours of love. Sent by the brethren to strengthen a new branch of the Church which had been settled at Antioch, he proved himself peculiarly fitted for this Christian mission. He sympathized with the new converts, and rejoiced with them at the work of God's grace amongst them, and was the means of adding much people unto the Lord.\* St. Barnabas also ministered to the temporal as well as to the spiritual wants of his weaker brethren. When the disciples determined to send relief to the Jewish Christians who were suffering from the dearth, he, and his companion Saul, were selected for this work.† It was "when they had fulfilled their ministry," (Acts, xii. 25,) that St. Barnabas was called to the apostolic office. He was not selected as were the other apostles by our Lord Himself, neither was he simply ordained as were his successors by apostolic authority. His appointment was the spe-

\* Epistle, verses 23, 24;    † verses 29, 30.

cial command of the Holy Spirit. We read that the Holy Ghost said, (Acts, xiii. 2,) "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And when they had received the outward sign of ordination, (verse 3,) these two apostles went forth upon the labours to which they were called. They first visited Cyprus, the native place of St. Barnabas. At Salamis, the capital of this island, they "preached the Word of God in the synagogues;" and at Paphos, a town of the same island, they converted the deputy Sergius Paulus to the faith, and struck Elymas the sorcerer with blindness. Antioch, in Asia Minor, was the scene of the opposition from the Jews which forced these apostles to declare that "from henceforth they would turn to the Gentiles," (Acts, xiii. 46.) The account of their labours and persecutions at Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra, other cities of Asia Minor, form the subject for the second lesson this morning. That for the evening relates the mission of these two apostles to Jerusalem to settle the points of difference between Jews and Gentiles. Returning to Antioch with the answer that the Gentiles who were "turned to God" were not to be troubled provided they observed necessary restrictions,\* they caused great consolation amongst the brethren at Antioch.

So far, then, St. Barnabas affords us an example of Christian kindness, meekness, and charity. He honoured the poor,† and behaved with gentleness and goodness unto all men.

\* 2nd Even. Less. verses 19, 20, and verse 31.

† 1st Morn. Less. verses 30, 31; see also verse 23.



But here the lesson in some measure changes, and from being our example, St. Barnabas becomes our warning. Through the frailty of their nature even God's saints are liable to err, and their very virtues, except under due regulation, may prove to them occasions of falling. So it was with St. Barnabas. In two instances he exercised his natural benevolence at the expense of Christian principle. He was yielding where he ought to have been firm. The first of these was his defence of Mark, whom he wished to retain in his company notwithstanding his former desertion and the remonstrances of St. Paul.\* The second instance of this error was his disobedience to the commands of the Church in the countenancing of Jewish prejudices. (Gal. ii. 13.) This fault in the apostle may warn us that "when we do good, we should know to whom we do it."† It may teach us that while like him we do good and give alms to the godly man, we must beware how we help or countenance the sinner.‡ We must not allow any mistaken kindness or sympathy to lead us astray from what is right ourselves, or countenance sin in another.

This is the last mention which Holy Scripture makes of St. Barnabas, but we know from other writings that he continued until the day of his death a faithful and diligent apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. Where he preached the gospel during that period is uncertain; but the scene of his last labours was his own native country of Cyprus. It was at Salamis, the capital of this island, that he suffered martyr-

\* 2nd Even. Less verse 39.      † 1st Even. Less.  
                                          verse 1;      ‡ verse 4.

dom, as it is thought, by being stoned. Thus in the character of St. Barnabas do we see brightly shining forth the result of those "singular gifts"\* with which God had endued him. He fulfilled in a remarkable manner the divine precept of love given by our Blessed Saviour to His followers in the gospel for this day. He shewed his sense of God's love to him by the love which he bore to his brethren. God, having chosen him and ordained him, he went and brought forth fruit,† which fruit has remained even up to the present day, in the result of his conversions and the benefit of his example. But not to apostles and holy men of old are confined the precious gifts of God's Holy Spirit. It is the privilege of every baptized Christian to receive God's manifold gifts of grace, and upon every baptized Christian rests the responsibility of rightly using and improving them. Such is the lesson which may be learned from the collect of this day; and it is one which may apply to all of every age and station in the Church of Christ. Upon each one of us God has bestowed gifts, "differing according to the grace that is in us," and by using these gifts according to the measure in which God has given them, each one of us may in some degree promote God's honour and his neighbour's good. God judgeth according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. While He expects of the rich and powerful, that they shall use their alms and talents in His service, the humble sacrifice of the lowly is no less pleasing in His sight. It is in small, as well as in great things, that Christians may shew their

\* Collect.      † Gospel, verse 16.

love to God and their brethren. Every little act of self-denial known only to God Himself, every little deed of kindness and sympathy and mutual assistance, even though apparently trifling, is pleasing in the sight of Him Who has said, that "a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose its reward." (St. Matthew, x. 42.) It may promote more than we are aware the happiness of those about us, and the glory of Almighty God.

Thus may even children learn to imitate the example of the holy apostle St. Barnabas. They may shew by their practice as well as by their profession, that they have received an increase of that Spirit, the first-fruits of Whose gifts is love.\*

\* See Collect.

**St. John the Baptist's Day.**

(JUNE 24.)

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*For the Epistle, Isa. xl. 1. Morning Lessons, Malachi,*  
*iii.; St. Matthew, iii.*  
*Gospel, St. Luke, i. 57. Evening Lessons, Malachi,*  
*iv.; St. Matt. xiv. 1-14.*

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ST. JOHN the Baptist was the forerunner or messenger of our Lord. His teaching prepared men's minds for the teaching of our Saviour, as his birth foretold our Saviour's birth. The miraculous birth of the holy baptist, as well as his subsequent holy life and violent death, are, therefore, the events which the Church remembers on this day.

Of the office and character of this messenger of God, Isaiah and Malachi had long before prophesied. The former minutely describes them in that portion of Scripture appointed for this day's epistle. This part of his prophecy which opens the description of the kingdom and glory of the Messiah, naturally gives an account of him who was to be His immediate forerunner; and so becomes a fit subject for our meditation on this day's festival. The prophet, in the figurative language of Holy Scripture, is here referring to a custom common amongst eastern nations, where, a sovereign

visiting a distant part of his dominions, would always be preceded by some messenger whose office it was to smooth his path, level the highways, and make all things clear for his approach.\* Such was the office of John the Baptist with regard to our Saviour. Before the "glory of the Lord was revealed"† by the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the flesh, the Baptist's voice sounded in the wilderness to "prepare the way of the Lord, and make straight in the desert a highway for our God."‡ He paved the way for that new dispensation which was to replace the carnal or fleshly ordinances of the law, and to stand before God for ever; and he prepared the hearts of men for the remission of their sins by the preaching of repentance, therefore does he call upon Zion and Jerusalem to "lift up their voice" "at these good tidings," "saying unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"||

The words of Malachi read to us both morning and evening are much to the same effect. The chapter for this morning foretells the approach of God's messenger in the midst of the corruptions and abuses which had sprung up amongst the Jewish people.§ That for this evening prophecies of the coming of John the Baptist, under the name of Elias or Elijah, who was his type.¶ It speaks of his office as the forerunner of the Sun of Righteousness. That these prophecies were literally fulfilled in the person of St. John, we learn from the writings of the New Testament, especially those portions selected for this day.

\* Epistle, verse 4, &c.; † verse 5; ‡ verse 3; § verse 9. § 1st Morn. Less. verse 5, &c. ¶ 1st Even. Less. verse 5.

The gospel relates his miraculous birth and the circumstances attending it. Brought into the world at the message of an angel, beyond the hopes of his astonished parents, the Baptist is early known to be a prophet of the Most High. His father, released from his dumbness,\* is the first to declare his divine mission, and in the memorable hymn, which the Church has appointed for our daily use, proves him to be the very person of whom the prophets had spoken, as "the voice in the wilderness," the messenger of Christ. God's kingdom, as we here learn, was at hand. The Messiah, Himself, was on the point of appearing to visit and redeem His people, but a way must first be opened to receive Him. The proud and rebellious heart of man, unprepared for divine grace, would be no more fit for the presence of the Saviour, than rough and rugged ways for the reception of an earthly sovereign, therefore was John the Baptist sent to turn the hearts of men by the preaching of repentance, that he might make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (St. Luke, i. 17.) The first lesson for this morning shews how he fulfilled this office. The scene of his preaching is here distinctly brought before us, and the means by which he worked are disclosed. He baptized with water unto repentance.† By this we are to understand that repentance, or the forsaking of sin, is the only fit preparation for the reception of our Redeemer, and therefore St. John's baptism of water only, which signified the cleansing of our souls from sin, was to prepare the way for that higher bap-

\* Gospel, verses 64, 68.

† 2nd Morn. Less. verse 11.

tism in which Christ Himself gives us a new birth unto righteousness. Thus the words which the prophet had figuratively spoken, were clearly fulfilled at the preaching of the Baptist: for the lofty looks of the proud, as mountains and hills, were then brought down; the hearts of the meek comforted and exalted, while the crooked paths of the sinner were made straight.\*

In St. John, also, we see the "Elias which was for to come," (St. Matthew, xi. 14;) not the very Elias who lived in the reign of Ahab, but the Elias spoken of by Malachi,† of whom the former was but a type. He lived in the desert, and was content with the coarsest clothing and humblest fare.‡ He boldly rebuked the great, while he preached to others by his own life and holy example. Thus did one in "the spirit and power of Elias" literally appear, as said the prophet, to "turn the children to the fathers, the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just."|| (See also St. Luke, i. 17.) But from preaching the truth and rebuking sin in the wilderness, the Baptist was called to suffer in a prison. He was thrust into it by Herod, king of Judea, whom he had rebuked for marrying his brother Philip's wife. But even here St. John was not silenced. Here he still continued to deliver his divine message. Sending two of his disciples, (St. Matthew, xi. 2,) whose minds he had been duly preparing, to see with their own eyes the mighty works of Christ, he drew off their thoughts from himself to that "One mightier than him, Who was to

\* See Epistle, verse 4. † 1st Even. Less. verse 5.  
‡ 2nd Morn. Less. verse 4. || 1st Even. Less. verses 5, 6.

come after him,"\* and so he accomplished his mission. The time of his departure was at hand, and he shortly after fell a victim to the revenge and jealousy of her, whose crime he had rebuked. The circumstances of this wicked deed are related to us in this evening's lesson.

But from thus contemplating the office and character of the holy Baptist, the Church would teach us in the collect, how to benefit by his teaching, and follow his example. "Repentance, whereby we forsake sin," must still be the condition of our being joined to Christ, and the preparation to our receiving Him. Baptized Christians, then, have still daily need to repent according to John's teaching, though they be not baptized with "the baptism of John." By continual and sincere repentance, therefore, we may all follow his doctrine.† To copy his holy life† may, however, seem to be a harder thing, for St. John lived in the wilderness and rebuked the great,—we live amongst our fellow-men, and have humbler duties to perform. Yet are we not therefore exempted from carrying out the lesson taught by this prayer. Still the spirit of the Baptist's character may be carried out in whatever station it may have pleased God to place us. In self-denying obedience and devotion to God we may perform our mission in the world, as he performed his in the desert. Still may we, even in the humblest sphere, be called upon to bear witness to God's truth, and to rebuke, if not by precept, yet by silent influence and example. Even from our very childhood we influence each other for good or evil. By consenting to evil ways, or joining in

\* 2nd Morn. Less. verse 11.    † Collect.



them, we encourage sin in others; while by withdrawing ourselves from what is sinful, and if need be, rebuking it, we may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

If, then, a man be overtaken in a fault, we may restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. (Gal. vi. 1.) We may "reprove the works of darkness" by having "no fellowship with them," (Eph. v. 11;) and "by letting our light shine before men, we may glorify our Father Which is in heaven." (St. Matthew, v. 16.)

## St. Peter's Day.

(JUNE 29.)

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*For the Epistle, Acts, xii. 1. Morning Lessons, Ecclus.  
xv.; Acts, iii.  
Gospel, St. Matt. xvi. 13. Evening Lessons, Ecclus.  
xix.; Acts, iv.*

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THE festival of St. Peter follows that of St. John the Baptist with a peculiar meaning. The Baptist was a type or representative of those servants of God who appeared before the coming of Christ, as St. Peter was a type or representative of the ministers and stewards of the kingdom which Christ came to establish. To-day, therefore, we consider the blessings of the Christian ministry, as compared with those of the law and the prophets, and we learn to realize the truth of our Saviour's words, "that though there had not risen a greater than John the Baptist, yet he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (St. Matthew, xi. 11.)

St. Peter, or according to his original Jewish name, Simon, was chosen by our Lord from among the fishermen of Bethsaida in Galilee. His brother, St. Andrew, first brought him to our Lord, (St. John, i. 41,) and he became a regular disciple on the occasion of the miraculous draught of fishes. (St. Luke, v. 3-11.)

The character of this apostle peculiarly fitted him for the apostolic office. His boldness made him forward to declare the truth, and his zeal diligent to preach it. For this reason, as well as on account of his more advanced years, he seems to have been generally chosen to express the mind of the other apostles. Just as in any band or society of men, one, for the sake of order and unity, is usually selected to give the general decision, so it was in the case of St. Peter. He speaks and is spoken to in the name of all the rest. The firmness and boldness with which in this capacity he declares the fundamental truths of Christianity, procured for him the name of Peter,—the rock or stone. (St. John, i. 42.) How he justified this title, his history, as given in Holy Scripture, will shew. Twice did St. Peter lay down the doctrine of our Blessed Lord's divinity. When, on the desertion of many of the disciples, our Saviour asked of the apostles, "Will ye also go away?" it was St. Peter who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (St. John, vi. 68, 69.) Again, by the same confession, openly professed on another occasion, he obtained from our Lord that remarkable distinction which is recorded in the gospel for the day. Addressing him by the name of Peter, or the rock, our Saviour promises that upon him who had thus laid the ground-work of all religion, shall rest the privilege of building our most holy faith.\* And so it came to pass; for to the preaching and labours of St. Peter may be ascribed the future

\* Gospel, verse 18.

foundation of the Christian Church, both amongst Jews and Gentiles. It was St. Peter who planted the Jewish branch of Christ's Church, when, through his preaching and ministry on the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were added to the faith. (Acts, ii. 41.) Thus to him was committed the "gospel of the circumcision," (see Gal. ii. 7,) and that he was likewise the rock on which was built the Church of the Gentiles, or of the "uncircumcision," we know from the circumstances which attended the conversion of Cornelius. Not only was Cornelius himself received into the Church through the ministry of this apostle, but "the Gentiles also received the word of God," (Acts, xi. 1,) and on them was poured out "the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts, x. 45.)

Before, however, St. Peter entered upon his high office and privileges as an apostle, he shewed in many instances the frailty and infirmities of a man. In the ardour of his zeal his faith failed him, and his boldness sometimes degenerated into presumption. The same earnestness which, under divine guidance, raised him to be chief amongst the apostles, without it, led him into error. Scarcely had he uttered the confession which pronounced Jesus to be the Son of God, than he shrank from contemplating the sufferings which his Divine Master would undergo as Son of man. (St. Matthew, xvi. 22, 23.) Though he was bold to walk on the water to go to Jesus, yet beginning to sink, he feared, and "being of little faith, cried, Lord, save me." (St. Matthew, xiv. 28-31.) It was also this self-confident zeal which betrayed St. Peter into his grievous fall. He had declared

to our Lord that he was ready to go with Him both into prison and to death, but relying on his own strength he failed, and in the hour of temptation he was overcome. Thus, he who on all occasions had been the chosen friend and companion of the Blessed Jesus, who had "been with Him in the holy mount," (2 St. Peter, i. 18,) and watched His agony in the garden, was guilty of thrice denying his Lord. His fall is doubtless recorded for our learning, to teach us, that if an Apostle could so err, we must, even in the midst of privileges, be "not high-minded, but fear;" and to warn us that "whosoever standeth, must take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.) In the very words of St. Peter himself, written doubtless in the recollection of his own backsliding, we learn from it to "pass the time of our sojourning here in fear." (1 St. Peter, i. 17. But if this great apostle is a warning to us in his sin, so is he also an example in his penitence. One look from his Divine Master (St. Luke, xxii. 61) recalled him to himself, and his bitter tears proved his contrition. Our Blessed Lord condescended to "admonish him as a friend,"\* and he received the admonition as a true penitent. He said not that it was of the Lord that he fell away, nor that the Lord had caused him to err.† He acknowledged by his sorrow that he ought not to do the things which He hateth, knowing that the Lord hath no need of the sinful man, neither hath "He given any man license to sin."‡ In this, then, he is our pattern; for "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and

\* 1st Even. Less. verse 19. † 1st Morn. Less. verses 11, 12; ‡ verse 20.

the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 St. John, i. 8, 9.) That St. Peter's sincere penitence was accepted, we know from our Saviour's dealings with him after His resurrection. He was the apostle to whom our risen Lord first appeared, (1 Cor. xv. 5,) and to him was given the thrice-repeated commission, "Feed My sheep." (St. John, xxi. 15-18.) Thus St. Peter, who had three times denied his Lord, had an opportunity of three times confessing Him. He repaired each separate denial by a separate confession of his love.

Thus armed with divine authority, St. Peter went forth after our Lord's ascension, to be the builder up of God's Church, and the pastor of His people. He took the lead in the election of the new apostle. (Acts, i. 15.) In Jerusalem and before the council, it was Peter who "opened his mouth" (Acts, iii. and iv.) to preach unto the people Jesus and the resurrection, confirming his preaching by many wonderful miracles.\* Rescued from the violence of the multitude, (Acts, v. 40,)+ twice delivered by the hand of an angel, (Acts, v. 20,)+ St. Peter was spared to continue his unwearied labours in the Church of Christ until his death. He preached the gospel in Asia Minor, resided sometime at Antioch, and at length suffered martyrdom by crucifixion at Rome, under the emperor Nero. At his own request, however, he was crucified with his head downwards, esteeming himself unworthy to suffer the same death as his divine Lord and Master.

\* 2nd Morn. and Even. Lessons. † See also 2nd Even. Less. verse 17. ‡ See also Epistle, verse 7.

Seeing, then, how in this first and chief apostle, human frailty was combined with the highest office and commission, the services now bid us look off from the instruments by which the Church was founded to the Church herself, which they came to found. The power and authority given to St. Peter and the other apostles, and which stood unaffected by their human frailties, still exist among us now, notwithstanding the frailty of those through whom they have descended. Though the treasure has been committed unto earthen vessels, (2 Cor. iv. 7,) yet the "gifts"\* which it conveys are still "excellent." The Church of Christ still rests upon the blessed truth that "Christ is the Son of the living God."† The ministers of Christ have still power to bind and to loose,‡ (see also St. Matthew, xviii. 18,) by pronouncing in God's Name pardon to all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel; and still do they receive authority to "feed the flock of God, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers." (Acts, xx. 28; | 1 St. Peter, v. 2.) They are commissioned to preach the Word of God which will make us "wise unto salvation," and to administer those holy sacraments by which Christ even now communicates Himself to all faithful receivers. Thus, under the gospel ministry, the poorest and humblest Christian may enjoy privileges which even prophets and kings who were but forerunners of our Lord, desired, but could not receive. (St. Matthew, xiii. 17.) It remains for us to see that we abuse not these great privileges, but improve them as we are on this day directed to

\* Collect. † Gospel, verse 16; ‡ verse 19.

do. While we look to the Church as the pillar and ground of the truth, (1 Tim. iii. 15, we must "obey them that have the rule over us" (Heb. xiii. 17) in it; knowing that they are "ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech us by them." (2 Cor. v. 20.) While we pray for all bishops and pastors, that they may diligently preach God's holy Word, we must ourselves strive in all things obediently to follow the same.\*

\* Collect.



**St. James's Day.**

(JULY 25.)

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*For the Epistle, Acts, xi. 27, & part of chap. xii.* *Morning Lesson, Eccclus. xxi.*  
*Gospel, St. Matt, xx. 20.* *Evening Lesson, Eccclus. xxii.*

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ST. JAMES, who is surnamed "the great," was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother to St. John. He and his brother, St. John, were called by our Saviour, while, with their father Zebedee they were engaged in fishing on the lake of Galilee; when they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed Him. (St. Matthew, iv. 19, 20.) The ready and zealous devotion which thus marked this apostle's character was the feature of his after life, and is the point which is set forth for our example on this day.

Probably the zeal and boldness with which both these apostles taught the highest mysteries of the Christian faith, was the cause of their being surnamed "Boanerges," or the sons of thunder. (St. Mark, iii. 17.) Even when their zeal was mistaken, and consequently reproved by our Lord, Holy Scripture still records it for our instruction, and the Church brings it forward for our profit. Two instances of this kind occurred. When the Samaritans refused to show

hospitality to our Lord, because His face was as though He would go to their rival city Jerusalem, the fervent zeal of the two brethren naturally resented the injury done to their divine Master; they prayed that fire from heaven might fall to consume the wicked people who had done Him this dishonour. But our Lord declared that He would not that any such means should be used in defence of Him Who had come "not to destroy men's lives but to save them," and by this declaration gently rebuked His too eager disciples. (St. Luke, ix. 5.) In this case, then, the ardour of St. James's zeal led him on to violence. How it led him afterwards into personal ambition, is related to us in the gospel for the day. He, with his brother St. John, had constantly attended our Lord in some of the most private retirements of His life; having been retained in His company when no one else, save St. Peter, was suffered to be with Him. From this, probably, the two apostles were led to expect a place of high honour in their Master's kingdom.\* But they forgot that our Lord's kingdom is not of this world, neither the high places of it distributed according to the rules and customs of this world. The question by which our Saviour meets the application of their mother, corrects this error.† By it He would explain to them that His cup or portion in this world would be the Cross,—His baptism, suffering,—therefore, according as they were willing to drink of this cup and partake of this baptism, so would they be nearest to Him in this life. What would be their portion in the next, it was not our Lord's pleasure to

\* Gospel, verse 21;    † verse 22.

reveal. Sufficient it was for them to know that the places prepared in heaven by the Father, would be given by Him to those most meet to inherit them; that the way to honour is humility, and the nearer they were to our Lord in His humiliation, the nearer would they be to Him in His glory. The two apostles shrank not from these conditions. They had counted the cost, when, in their fervent love and zeal they had left their father and all that they had to follow Christ; and now that the true nature of our Lord's kingdom is revealed to them, they are as willing to follow Him for spiritual as for temporal privileges,—and so they had their reward. The prayer of the mother was answered, though not in the way she had anticipated. St. James, as the portion of Scripture selected for this day's epistle tells us, was killed by the sword of Herod,\* and was thus the first apostle who went to receive the crown of martyrdom. He entered into the place appointed for him, and inherited the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world. In this his blessed end, then, we see a strong contrast to the end of the "wicked man,"† which is described in the lesson for this morning. The "way of the sinner may be made plain with stones, but the end thereof is the pit of hell."‡ The path of the just man, on the contrary, may be rugged and thorny,—his portion, suffering and the cross,—but "for his death we make little weeping, for he is at rest."||

Such were the blessed consequences which attended the ready devotion and self-renuncia-

\* Epistle, (Acts, xii.) verse 2.    † Morn. Less. verses 9, 10;    ‡ verse 10.    || Even. Less. verse 11.

tion of the apostle St. James. The Church would now bid us see how we may follow his steps.\* All baptized Christians have received, like St. James, a call from our Lord. They have been signed with the sign of the Cross, and baptized unto His death. This, then, is their lot and portion, the cup which they have to drink of, and the baptism with which they are baptized. For them, also, our Lord has prepared a place in heaven, in which they may reign hereafter who suffer for Him here. It is to train us for these heavenly mansions, that our Lord, from our very childhood, lays His Cross upon us. He does so in many ways. First, He calls upon us all to forsake all worldly and carnal affections, that we may be evermore ready to follow His holy commandments.\* What these affections are, our baptismal vow taught us when it bound us to "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." How they are most likely to ensnare us, it must be left to each individual Christian to determine, for the temptations which arise from them must differ according to our different ages, circumstances, and stations. So far we may be certain; that when those things which are smooth and pleasant in this life, be they great or small, keep us back from following Christ, then they become to us worldly and carnal affections, which must be renounced and forsaken. The pain and struggles of so doing may be great, yet it is only a portion of that cup which is to prepare us for glory. Sometimes, also, God would call us closer to Himself

\* See Collect.

and lead us on by a nearer way to our heavenly inheritance. Thus He may "take away the desire of our eyes with a stroke," and bid us resign those who are nearest and dearest to us into His hands. Then we must remember the example of the apostle St. James, who left his father and all he had to follow Christ without delay. As we imitate his zealous love and ready obedience, so may we hope to share their blessed consequences. If we are ready to resign all with submission into God's hands, He can give us manifold more than we have forsaken in this present time, and in the world to come everlasting life. (St. Luke, xviii. 30.) The same Lord Who brought us near to Him in His Cross and Passion, will also bring us near to Him in His Resurrection. He will make us to "be with Him where He is, that we may behold His glory," (St. John, xvii. 24,) and "inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world." (St. Matthew, xxv. 34.)

## St. Bartholomew's Day.

(AUGUST 24.)

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| <i>For the Epistle, Acts, v. 12.</i> | <i>Morning Lesson, Eccclus.</i> |
|                                      | xxiv.                           |
| <i>Gospel, St. Luke, xxii. 24.</i>   | <i>Evening Lesson, Eccclus.</i> |
|                                      | xxv.                            |

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ST. BARTHOLOMEW was one of the twelve apostles; and is mentioned as such by the three evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. Though he is not mentioned under that name by St. John, yet he is so generally identified with him whom that apostle calls Nathaniel, that we may safely consider them as one and the same person.\* When, therefore, on this

\* Though it is nowhere positively asserted that St. Bartholomew and Nathaniel are the same person, yet the reasons for supposing it are such as to leave the fact almost beyond a doubt. First, St. John speaks of Nathaniel as amongst the eleven apostles, therefore he must have been one of the apostles mentioned by the other evangelists under a different name. Of these, seven being mentioned by St. John himself, under their usual names, could not have been the "Nathaniel," of whom he elsewhere speaks. Four still remain, amongst whom we may look for one to answer to Nathaniel. These are, St. James, St. Matthew, St. Simon, and St. Bartholomew. Of St. James, we know that he was a near kinsman of our Lord, and therefore could not have been brought to Him as a stranger, as Nathaniel was. St. Matthew's other name was Levi, and if the question rests between St.

day, we commemorate St. Bartholomew, we think of him as the man of whom our Lord has said, that he was "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." (St. John, i. 47.) We are taught to study his character, and watch its blessed fruits in him, that we may learn to copy it in ourselves.

"Guile," in the sense here used, signifies hypocrisy,—anything connected with deceit or double-dealing; therefore, by guilelessness, we may understand simplicity, and purity of heart,—that honesty and sincerity of purpose, which prepares men's minds to receive the truths of God. From the very little we know of St. Bartholomew, it would seem that these qualities were conspicuous in him. When Philip first announced to him that the Messiah was come in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, he naturally doubted, because he had learnt from the Scriptures, that "no good thing could come out of Nazareth," (St. John, i. 46,) and he also knew that Bethlehem was to be the birth-place of Christ. Yet he was not prejudiced by his own knowledge or opinion. At Philip's request, he consented to "come and see," and his search was blessed. Our Lord discloses Himself to him by giving him a token of His omnipresent power, (verse 48,) and Nathaniel at once confesses Him to be the Son of God,—the King of Israel. Such was the conversion of the apostle Bartholomew. Found

Simon and St. Bartholomew, the latter, who is always mentioned with St. Philip, is much more likely than St. Simon to be the Nathaniel whom Philip brought under the notice of our Lord. Besides which the apostle St. Simon is generally numbered amongst our Saviour's brethren.

in the quiet discharge of his duty, searching the Scriptures and enquiring after truth, our Lord looked upon him when he knew it not, and marked him for His own. First, he gave him grace truly to "believe His Word," and then by the apostolic commission with which He afterwards honoured him, He enabled him to "preach" it to others also.\* Accordingly, he appears, under the name of Nathaniel, amongst the other apostles who were the chosen witnesses of our Lord's Resurrection. (St. John, xxi. 2.) Doubtless he took his part in performing those miracles by which God vouchsafed to confirm His Word, and enlarge His Church.† After the Ascension of our Lord, he preached the Word in India and Armenia, and is at length supposed to have fallen victim to the vengeance of a wicked king, many of whose subjects he had converted. He suffered martyrdom by being flayed alive, and then beheaded, or as some suppose, crucified. Thus did the apostle Bartholomew truly believe and preach God's Holy Word. The prayer, then, which we on this day offer up is, that the Church may love the Word which he believed, and both preach and receive the same; the lesson which we learn is, how to receive it as he received it, that we may profit by it as he profited. God's Word is still preached among us now, if not by apostles, at least by their successors in the Church of Christ. Though God may not now vouchsafe to accompany their preaching by outward signs and miracles, yet He is still present to bless the Word to the hearts of faithful hearers. Much, however, will depend upon the

\* Collect. † Epistle, verses 12, 14.



manner in which their hearts are prepared to receive it. Our Lord Himself has taught us, in the parable of the sower, that it is only when it falls upon honest and good hearts that it brings forth fruit to perfection, (St. Luke, viii. 15;) and we also know, that the Word preached did not profit, when it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. (Heb. iv. 2.) To this truth many examples in Scripture bear witness. When Balaam enquired of the Lord, his heart was bent on covetousness, (Numb. xxii. 8, 19,) and therefore he could not expect, and did not receive, a blessing. Likewise, also, Ahab only sought council at the hands of those who would prophesy no evil concerning him. (1 Kings, xxii. 8.) He enquired not in an honest and good heart, and so he gained no benefit. If, then, we would rightly understand and profitably learn the truths of God's Holy Word, we must look to St. Bartholomew for our example, and to the services of this day for our instruction. It was Nathaniel's guileless character that procured for him the knowledge of Christ, and gained His praise; so, also, the nearer we approach to the disposition of Nathaniel, the nearer shall we be to know Christ and receive His blessed truths. We must come to the teaching of God's Holy Word with sincere and honest minds, ready to abide and profit by it, even though it should offend our prejudices and condemn our evil passions and desires. We shall not, however, attain unto this holy disposition until we have learnt to cultivate that humble and lowly spirit which is inculcated by our Lord in the gospel for the day. Humility is one of the chief features of the gospel. Our

Lord Himself and His holy apostles, came among us to teach it by precept as well as by example.\* Surely, then, it becomes us their followers, to imitate the child-like temper which they taught and practised, if we would benefit by the truths which they preached, for it is to the meek that the Lord reveals His mysteries, and only if we are converted and become as little children, can we hope to inherit the kingdom of God. (St. Matthew, xviii. 8.) But the truly guileless man is single-hearted and honest towards his neighbour as well as towards God. While he "leadeth an uncorrupt life, doing the thing that is right, and speaking the truth from his heart; while he setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, he is also careful to use no deceit in his tongue, nor do evil to his neighbour, neither to slander his neighbour." (Psalm xv.) These, then, are the duties which this evening's lesson would impress upon us, when it teaches us to "keep our word and deal faithfully with our neighbour,"† and when it lays upon us all those relative obligations which are due from man to man. It is by thus striving to cultivate the harmlessness of the dove, we shall be preparing to attain to the wisdom of the serpent; for "the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." (St. James, iii. 17.) This "wisdom,"‡ which is set forth in the lesson for this morning, must be the object of our prayers, and the end of our endeavours. It is taught

\* Gospel, verses 26, 27. † Even. Less. verse 3.

‡ Morn. Less. verse 1, &c.

in the Word of God, and "contained in the book of the covenant of the Most High."\* To attain unto it, we must, as we are taught this day, "lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness," for so only shall we "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls." (St. James, i. 21.) Thus may each member of Christ who "desires the sincere milk of the Word," hope to "grow thereby," (1 St. Peter, ii. 2;) and thus may the whole Church, loving that Word which the apostles preached, and both preaching and receiving the same,† still be the means of "adding much people unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."‡

\* Morn. Less. verse 23.    † Collect.    ‡ Epistle,  
verse 14.

**St. Matthew's Day.**

(SEPTEMBER 21.)

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*Epistle*, 2 Cor. iv. 1.*Morning Lesson*, Ecclus.

xxxv.

*Gospel*, St. Matt., ix. 9.*Evening Lesson*, Ecclus.

xxxviii.

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ST. MATTHEW was called from a very low and despised employment to be an Apostle and an Evangelist. He was a publican or tax-gatherer, which means that he collected the money which the Roman government exacted from the Jewish people. This trade was one which gave rise to great temptations. Those who were engaged in it, living on the profits which remained to themselves, after having paid the required sum to the government, were often guilty of great extortion and fraud. They enriched themselves at the expence of others. The office, therefore, and those employed in it, were held in great contempt amongst the Jews. Such was the occupation of Levi the publican. Sitting on the shores of the lake of Gennesareth, he was receiving toll or custom from those who passed over the lake when our Saviour saw him.\* But "the Lord seeth not as man seeth,

\* Gospel, verse 9.

for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Our Blessed Saviour, Who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, sees in this despised publican one fitted to be His disciple. He therefore saith to him "Follow Me;" and St. Matthew readily obeyed Him. He left his profitable trade, forsook his ill-gotten wealth, rose up, and followed Him. About two years after this first call, St. Matthew was admitted to the number of the twelve apostles, and remained a witness of our Saviour's life and actions until the day of His 'Ascension. Still he seems ever to have kept in humble remembrance his former mode of life. He classes himself after St. Thomas in numbering the apostles, and styles himself always "Levi," and "the 'Publican." For about eight years after the Ascension of our Saviour, St. Matthew preached the gospel in Judea. At the end of that time, and preparatory to beginning his labours amongst the Gentiles, he is supposed to have written the gospel which goes by his name; and after preaching in the eastern provinces of Parthia and Ethiopia, suffered martyrdom in a town of the latter country, in what manner is not known.

To St. Matthew then we owe the first written record of the life and teaching of our Blessed Lord and Saviour. The truths of the gospel, handed down to us by him, are a test of his own conversion, as well as a means of leading others also into the path of life. Only we must receive them as he did, if we would obtain from them a like benefit. Such is the lesson which we may gather from the words of

St. Paul in the epistle for this day, wherein he discovers to us one of the reasons why the gospel is so often preached in vain. When "the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not," then the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God "shines not unto them.\* The ministry of those who preach to us in all sincerity and honesty is of no avail. The gospel is hid to them who are thus "lost."†

Now by the "god of this world," we may understand the same thing as that against which our Saviour has warned us under the name of "Mammon." (St. Matt. vi. 24.) It is "the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches which choke the Word, so that it becometh unfruitful." (St. Mark, iv. 19.) These temptations are common to all, poor as well as rich. The rich man falls into them when he makes a god of his possessions—when he spends his time and thoughts in adding house to house, and field to field, merely for his own gratification, without regard to the glory of God. With his mind thus "blinded" he cannot hear the voice of the gospel, exhorting him not to "lay up treasure upon earth where the moth and rust doth corrupt," (St. Matt. vi. 20,) and warning him that "covetousness is idolatry." (Col. iii. 5.) But the poor man is no less liable than the rich to be led astray by the God of this world. When he enriches himself by any means which he knows to be not strictly honest in the sight of God, or when he sacrifices to his gains the time which God has consecrated to Himself, then he acts against the commands

\* Epistle, verse 4;    † verse 3.

of that gospel which has told him to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," (St. Matt. vi. 33,) and to "labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." (St. John, vi. 27.)

Thus is "the love of money the root of all evil," and they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown the soul in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.) All these St. Matthew renounced when he embraced the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and followed Him. So must we, if we would that "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."\* We must forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches,"† and follow the same Jesus Christ the Son of God. To do this, we need not forsake our worldly calling. God has commanded us to labour, and has said that "if any would not work neither should he eat," (2 Thess. iii. 10;) and the apostles themselves also, laboured, working with their hands. (1 Cor. iv. 12.) Trades and handicrafts are the ordinance of God, by which men help each other, and society is carried on.‡ "Without them cannot the city be inhabited, and they shall not dwell therein, neither go up and down.¶ Those who practise them well "maintain the state of the world, and all the desire is in the work of their craft."§ Only what the Church would this day teach us, is

\* Epistle, verse 6.      † Collect.

‡ Even. Less. verses 25-34;    ¶ verse 32;    § verse 34.

that these our callings must be fulfilled in the fear and service of Almighty God. We must depart, as St. Matthew did, from any wickedness that we may have been guilty of in the pursuit of them, even at our own sacrifice; for "to depart from wickedness, is a thing well-pleasing unto the Lord,"\* and the "sacrifice of the just man is acceptable."† "All these things must be done, because of the commandment."‡ But simply to be true and just in all our dealings, will not satisfy those who call themselves Christians. With them it will be a duty as it is a privilege to devote some portion of their possession, be they great or small, to God's glory and their neighbour's good. The wicked servant in the parable was not the less punished for misusing his talent because he had only one, and the poor widow's two mites were as acceptable to God as the gifts which the rich men cast into the treasury. To all then, whatever may be their portion of this world's goods, may be applied the Church's exhortation this day, when she bids us "give the Lord His honour with a good eye, and diminish not the first fruits of our hands." In all our gifts to shew a cheerful countenance, and dedicate our tithes with gladness; to give unto the Most High according as He hath enriched us, and as we have gotten give with a cheerful eye, for the Lord recompenseth, and will give seven times as much."|| And from obeying these injunctions none, even the poorest of Christ's members, need be excluded. Either in time, or in labour, or in other ways, if not in money, we

\* Morn. Less. verse 3; † verse 6; ‡ verse 5.

|| Morn. Less. verses 8—12.



may all devote to Almighty God what otherwise we should have spent on ourselves, and so in the spirit as well as in the letter imitate the example of the apostle St. Matthew.

We are taught then on this day how to make to ourselves such "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, [i.e. such a use of our worldly possessions] that when we fail they may receive us into everlasting habitations," (St. Luke, xvi. 9;) and we learn the full meaning of our Saviour's words when He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (St. Matt. vi. 19.)

**St. Michael and all Angels.**

(SEPTEMBER 29.)

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*For the Epistle, Rev. xii. 7. Morning Lessons, Gen. xxxii;  
Acts xii. to verse 20.  
Gospel, St. Matt. xviii. 1. Evening Lessons, Dan. x. 5;  
St. Jude, 6—16.*

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THE holy angels form a part of the invisible creation of God. They stand around God's throne in heaven, and are ready, though unseen, to "succour and defend us on earth." It is on these heavenly beings that the Church bids us meditate to day. The services for this day therefore speak to us of the nature and office of the holy angels. Raising our minds from the visible to the invisible world, they gather up what holy Scripture has revealed concerning these heavenly beings, shewing how these unseen spirits have ministered, and still do minister for "them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 14.) God's Word teaches that angels are spiritual beings attendant on the Creator, yet of a nature superior to our own. They were created by God to be perfect and sinless, free from all earthly stains and temptations. Yet even these happy and blessed beings "kept not their first estate." Some amongst them, becoming rebellious and apostate, fell under

the wrath of God, left their first habitation, and, as we read in the second evening lesson, "are reserved by the Almighty in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."\* Thus arose that "war in heaven" which forms the subject of that portion of Scripture appointed for this day's epistle.†

This war thus vividly described to us may represent the contest which has ever been going on, and is still continuing in God's kingdom, up to this day. Good and bad angels are here represented as contending together in the Church of Christ. The wicked spirits, with the old serpent called the devil and Satan, at their head, are fighting against St. Michael and the good and holy spirits of whom he is the chief. As they once disputed together about the body of Moses, even so it is still. Could our eyes be open to discern them, we should behold the devil and his angels seeking to devour the souls of men,—good angels fighting for them, to deliver them out of the enemy's hand. This contest which is ever going on in the world of spirits will not be finally ended until the time when Satan shall be finally cast out and all his angels with him. Meanwhile, we who are striving to "overcome by the blood of the Lamb,"‡ have the comfortable assurance that "they be more with us than they that be against us." Such is the wonderful order in which God has constituted the service of angels,|| that while evil spirits are active in tempting us to sin, there are "ten thousand times ten thousand" heavenly beings

\* 2nd Even. Less. verse 6.

‡ verse 11.

† Epistle, (Rev. xii.) 7;

|| Collect.

before the throne of God ready to encamp about us and deliver us. This truth which we gather from the collect, is illustrated from holy Scripture in the other services appointed for this day. Our Lord Himself tells us in the gospel that the little ones of His flock have angels in heaven to guard over and protect them;\* and from the other portions of God's Word which we read to day, we learn how these unseen beings have, in all ages of the Church, been employed in succouring and defending His saints. Jacob, in his wanderings and trials, was "met" by the angels of God.† When St. Peter was fast bound in prison, it was an angel of the Lord that loosed him from his chains and set him at liberty.‡ Sometimes our Lord Himself, under the old dispensation, vouchsafed to hold communion with man under the form of an angel. As when we read in the first lesson for this morning, that Jacob "wrestled with a man,"|| it was the divine Being Himself, the Lord Jehovah, Who thus communed with him and strengthened him. He it was also who appeared to the Prophet Daniel in that glorious form,§ (described to us in this evening's first lesson,) with two others, angels, attendant upon Him.¶ Besides these few examples of the ministration of angels which the Church records this day, holy Scripture abounds with many other instances of their appearing and influencing mankind.

In relating the various facts and histories

\* Gospel, verse 10. † 1st Morn. Less. verse 1.

‡ 2nd Morn. Less. verses 7, 8.

|| 1st Morn. Less. verse 24. § 1st Even. Less. verses 5, 6.

¶ verses 16—18.

connected with God's Church and His saints, the Word of God often draws aside the veil which hides the invisible world from our view, and ascribes to these heavenly messengers what commonly is said to be the result of accident or chance. Whether the circumstance recorded is for the punishment of the wicked or the welfare of the good, it is usually by the unseen hand of an angel that God brings it about.

The sudden pestilence which caused the deliverance of Judah and the overthrow of the Assyrians, was sent by an angel. (2 Kings, xix. 35.) An angel caused the plague which was sent to bring David to a sense of his sin, (2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16;) and to one of these heavenly beings also, was entrusted the care of deterring Balaam from his wicked course. (Num. xxii. 22.) While it was an angel of the Lord that smote Herod with that loathsome disease of which he died, (Acts, xii. 23,) the healing property of the pool of Bethesda was no less the work of an angel. (St. John, v. 4.) Angels were also the peculiar attendants of the Son of God. As they were appointed to watch over the saints of God, so did they specially wait on Him Who was the King of Saints. They rejoiced at His Birth, (St. Luke, ii. 10, 13;) ministered to Him in His Temptation, and in His Agony, (St. Matt. iv. 11, and St. Luke, xxii. 43;) they proclaimed His Resurrection, (St. Matt. xxviii. 5;) and hereafter will they attend upon Him, when He shall return in His glory. (St. Matt. xxv. 31.) Thus are these unseen beings continually employed to succour and defend the people of God. They

are ever hurrying to and fro with messages of mercy from the courts of God in heaven to the abodes of men on earth. Whether men's eyes are open to discern them, or whether, as is now usually the case, they are withheld from our sight, still they are ever present, ministering in the Church of Christ and waiting on His members. They are all around us and about us, watching us in our heavenward path, rejoicing at our repentance, (St. Luke, xv. 10,) and grieving over our falls. They assist us in the trials, and temptations, and duties of life,—and are sent to comfort and sustain us in the hour of death.

The succour and defence of man form, however, but one part of the angels' office. As the collect for this day teaches us, it is also their blessed and glorious employment to do God service in heaven. There they stand in perfect order and harmony before the throne of God, to praise Him and to do His pleasure. (Ps. ciii. 21.) In this then they afford a pattern which we on earth may humbly but earnestly aspire to copy. We, who hope one day to partake of the nature of angels, should make it our delight even here below to imitate their heavenly tempers, and join in their holy employment; like them, to be ever ready to praise God and do His pleasure; to fulfil His commandments, and hearken unto the voice of His words. (Ps. ciii. 20, 21.) Thus, from meditating on these holy beings, do we learn how we, even while in the flesh, may hold such communion with them, as to prepare for their constant companionship in heaven. As they tarry round about us to deliver us, (Ps. xxxiv. 7,) and have

charge over us to keep us in all our ways, (Ps. xci. 11,) so let us cherish and follow their holy influences, thank God for them, and pray to Him to continue them to us. As they continually serve and praise God before His throne, so let us, their fellow-servants, strive to do His will on earth as they do it in heaven. "With angels and archangels, let us unite to praise and magnify His holy Name."

**St. Luke's Day.**

(OCTOBER 18.)

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*Epistle*, 2 Timothy, iv. 5.      *Morning Lesson*, Ecclus. li.  
*Gospel*, St. Luke, x. 1.      *Evening Lesson*, Job, i.

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ST. LUKE, the evangelist, whose memory we celebrate to-day, was by profession a physician. The chief facts left on record of his history, are these. A Jewish proselyte of Antioch in Syria, he was brought up in all the arts and sciences and refinements for which that city was famed. Converted to Christianity by St. Paul, during that apostle's abode there, he became henceforth the faithful friend and disciple of the great apostle of the Gentiles; but it was after the separation of Paul and Barnabas, and while the latter was at Troas, that St. Luke joined himself to him, to be his constant companion and fellow traveller. His gospel, written during these travels, consequently bears the stamp of St. Paul, who probably saw and approved it, and is more particularly suited to the Gentiles, to whom St. Paul preached. The Acts of the Apostles, in which he himself, from the time of St. Paul's visit to Macedonia, appears to bear a part, was probably written at Rome after St. Paul's imprisonment. Of the great affection



of this apostle for St. Luke, many passages of his epistles testify. Writing to the Corinthians, he speaks of him as "the brother whose praise is in the gospel." (2 Cor. viii. 18.) In another place he calls him the "beloved physician," (Col. iv. 14,) and in the epistle for this day, he records his constancy in remaining with him, as opposed to the desertion of the worldly-minded Demas.\* From this short mention of St. Luke's name, then, may be drawn a profitable lesson. Only a few short years before, the names of these two disciples were coupled together as companions of St. Paul.\* Both had joined themselves to him to "share his afflictions, to do the work of an evangelist, to make full proof of their ministry."† Now only Luke is with him.‡ Demas, having "put his hand to the plough, and looked back, is not fit for the kingdom of God." St. Luke, faithful unto death, presses on to obtain "a crown of life." He suffered martyrdom in a good old age, having spent his life in unwearied exertions amongst the Gentiles.

But it is to St. Luke's character as a physician that the services for this day would chiefly turn our thoughts. The different professions and trades out of which the apostles and evangelists of God's Church were selected, are not without their spiritual meaning. As the fishermen of Galilee were taught by their trade that they were to become fishers of the souls of men, so St. Luke's former profession also taught him to transfer his powers of healing from the bodies to the souls of men. Sin is the sickness which he is henceforth commissioned to cure. From

\* Epistle, verse 10; † verse 5; ‡ verse 11.

being a physician of the body, therefore, he becomes an "evangelist and physician of the soul."\* Instead of remedies prescribed for the healing of the body, he sets before us in his gospel wholesome medicines for the benefit of the soul. It is he who points especially to our Lord as the great High Priest and Sacrifice through Whom we are cleansed and healed from sin. In the parable of the prodigal son he would prescribe repentance as a medicine for sin, while at the same time, he brings before us our Lord as the great Restorer and Healer of penitent sinners. Also in all our Blessed Saviour's miracles of healing which are more especially recorded and dwelt upon by this evangelist, he would set before us types of the far higher acts of healing which our Redeemer works upon our souls. He Who restored the leper and raised the paralytic, can also restore and quicken us who were dead in trespasses and sins: for "whether is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?" Thus are our thoughts at once raised from all earthly helpers, to Christ, the great Physician and Healer of our souls. Above all prophets, and apostles, and evangelists, He bestows the healing which they are commissioned to apply. He came, as we learn from His own words, "to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind." (St. Luke, iv. 18.) He has promised to "bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick," (Ezekiel, xxxiv. 16;) and in the commission to the seventy disciples, part of which is given in the gospel for

\* Collect.

this day, He charges them to bring peace to those who will receive them,\* to heal the sick, and proclaim to them the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. (St. Luke, x. 9.) He it is Who has ever watched over the souls and bodies of His faithful people. If we seek Him, as in this morning's lesson we are taught to do, He will be our defender and helper,† preserving our bodies and souls from destruction. He will not leave us in the days of our trouble, nor in the time of the proud when there is no help;‡ but will save us from destruction, and deliver us from the evil time.¶ Sometimes, however, the dealings of the great Physician may be severe, even though in tender mercy. As the earthly physician sometimes saves the life of his patient at the expense of great bodily pain, so the Lord often "chastises us in the flesh, that our spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." As in the case of Job, of whom we read this evening, He "chastens those whom He loves, and scourges those whom He will receive." Received, therefore, in the spirit in which Job received them, these chastisements will not fail to work together for good. For if the Lord "maketh sore," He also "bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole." (Job, v. 18.) He "doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men," and "though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." (Lam. iii. 32, 33.) Such are some of the means by which the great Healer of mankind watches over and provides for the health of our souls.

\* Gospel, verse 5. † Morn. Less. verse 2;

‡ verse 10; ¶ verse 12.

Whether we benefit by them or no, depends on the way in which we apply them to ourselves; for as in temporal diseases no patient could expect to be cured who departed from the rules prescribed by the physician, so also is it in spiritual sickness. When we neglect to apply God's ordained remedies, we cannot expect to receive God's promised cure. This was the case with Demas, of whom we read this day. He shrank from the wholesome doctrines of God's holy Word, and preferred the smooth and pleasant things of this world, to the safe and narrow way which leadeth unto life, and so he fell away. That we may not be like Demas, we must strictly follow the precepts of God's holy gospel, even though the world should tell us they are hard sayings, and persuade us to "walk no more in them." We must never neglect His ordinances, even though the voice of His Church through them, should call us one way, and our worldly interests another. Whatever may be said by the world, or by the thoughtless and careless children of this world, we, as Christians, are assured, that these things are wholesome medicines ordered for the benefit of our souls. We know that though they may cost us a sacrifice, yet they will afterwards "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby."

If thus, like St. Luke, we continue steadfast unto death, following at all cost, the wholesome medicines of the doctrines which he taught, we may humbly trust that our prayer this day will be answered,—“all the diseases of our souls will be cured.”\*

\* Collect.

mankind will look down from heaven, and have compassion upon us. He Who "sees our ways" will heal us. (Isaiah, lvii. 18.) He will "heal our backslidings, and love us freely." (Hosea, xiv. 4.)

## Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude.

(OCTOBER 28.)

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*Epistle*, St. Jude, i.

*Morning Lesson*, Job, xxiv.  
and xxv.

*Gospel*, St. John, xv. 17.

*Evening Lesson*, Job, xlii.

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WE are now drawing to the close of the Church's year, and have arrived at the last of those festivals sacred to the memory of Christ's holy apostles. On this day, then, we sum up as in a whole the teaching which these festivals have severally brought before us; we remember the benefits which are to be derived from those who were the pillars or foundation-stones of the Church of Christ, and we learn to do our part towards rightly using and improving them.

The Church of Christ, of which He Himself is the head Corner-stone, is built, as the collect for this day reminds us, "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets."\* They delivered to us the doctrine which He came to teach, and they built up the Church which He came to found. But while Christ and His apostles thus form the chief part of this divine building, we His members, as lively stones of that spiritual house, have to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 St.

\* Collect.

Peter, ii. 5.) Upon us it devolves to remain joined together in the unity of the Spirit, to live in the bond of love, and to contend for the purity of the faith.

The two apostles, St. Simon and St. Jude, whose memories now remain to be celebrated, seem peculiarly calculated to teach us this lesson. They were brothers, and were also reckoned amongst the brethren of our Lord, (St. Matthew, xiii. 55,) being the sons of Joseph, His reputed father. The characteristic of both was a religious zeal.

St. Simon's surname of Zelotes, or the Canaanite, signifying zeal, shows that he belonged before his conversion to the Jewish sect of the zealots. This sect was remarkable for the fierce and extraordinary ardour with which they defended their law. Whether this ardent spirit was conspicuous in St. Simon's after life, as a Christian, we know not, but from his having belonged to this sect, we may conclude that zeal was a peculiar feature in his disposition. The gospels make no further mention of him than simply to number him amongst the brethren of our Lord; neither does history tell us much that is certain of his apostolic labours. The general supposition is, that after preaching in Egypt and in the northern provinces of Africa, he joined St. Jude in Persia, where both suffered persecution at the hands of the Magi, and both together received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Jude is likewise mentioned in St. Matthew's gospel (xiii. 55) amongst the brethren of our Lord, and after the Ascension, the principal scene of his labours, previous to his martyrdom

in Persia, is thought to have been Mesopotamia. But the chief notice which holy Scripture takes of St. Jude, is the record of that question (St. John, xiv. 22) which he put to our Saviour, and which forms a part of the conversation recorded in the gospel for the day. Our Saviour had been promising to the disciples the special manifestations of His presence, (verses 20, 21,) and St. Jude, not yet understanding the spiritual nature of our Redeemer's kingdom, asks how He will manifest Himself unto them and not unto the world. Our Blessed Lord then takes occasion to speak to them of the hidden workings of His Spirit in the hearts of His faithful servants. The Spirit of God, as He here tells them, manifests Himself in the hearts of those who love Him and keep His commandments, (verse 28;) He Who dwells in the whole Church of Christ as in a temple, lives and moves in each one of His members separately, in proportion as they love and obey Him. He leads them into all truth, and discloses to them the deep things of God. While the "world" (verse 17) and the "natural man" can neither know them nor discern them, the Spirit of God enables us "to see the things which are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 12.) It was this Holy Spirit, dwelling in the hearts of the apostles, which supported them against the hatred and persecution of the world.\* The Blessed Comforter abiding amongst them, enabled them to bear witness to the truth,† built them up in the unity of the Spirit, and bound them together in the bands of love. Such is the sure and solid foundation of the Church of

\* Gospel, verse 20; † verse 27.



Christ. With us, then, it remains to keep alive these blessed privileges, and continue in that holy doctrine and fellowship, and this is what the services for this day would teach us to do. In the epistle, St. Jude, the apostle of zeal, exhorts us to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."\* Many now, as in the days of St. Jude, may "creep in"† to endeavour to turn us away from the purity of the faith, as it was delivered to us by Christ and His apostles. But to them we must give no heed. The truths of Christ as taught us in His Holy Word, and delivered to us through His Church, must be our only rule, and if any man bring any other doctrine, we must neither receive him ourselves nor encourage those who do. But whilst we thus contend earnestly for the unity and purity of Christ's holy Church, we, His members, must not forget to contribute to it ourselves. Christ, indeed, is as "a Son over His own house," but we, who form a part of that house, must "hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. iii. 6.)

God has indeed promised that we should be His temple, but then, if we would that He should "dwell in us and walk in us," we have to "separate ourselves from what is evil, and touch not the unclean thing." (See 2 Cor. vi. 16-18.) Warned by the example of the people of Israel, who having been once saved, were afterwards destroyed because they believed not;‡ of the angels who kept not their first estate,|| and of Sodom and Gomorrah who gave

\* Verse 3;

† verse 4;

‡ verse 5;

|| verse 6.

themselves over to wickedness,\* let us take heed that we turn not aside from the holy commandment delivered to us, lest we bring dishonour upon that spiritual temple to which we belong. Rather, "building up ourselves in our most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost, should we keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (St. Jude, 20-22.)

In this the saints of God in all ages may be our pattern, and the Word of God our guide. With the holy apostles whom we commemorate this day, let us then learn to increase our zeal, and quicken our devotion in the things of God, that we each one in our lives and conversations preserve the unity of the spirit, and uphold the purity of the faith. With Job, who is also brought before us this day, let us strive to see God's hand in all things,† and with him we shall learn that God's ways are not our ways. The Spirit of God dwelling within us will make us discern the wondrous ways of His Providence, and teach that though "the wicked may be exalted for a little time, yet he is soon gone and brought low,"‡ while the saints of God rest on a more sure and solid foundation. Though they may for a while suffer affliction and persecution, yet if they endure unto the end, their "latter end shall be more blessed than the beginning."||

If thus we learn to love God and keep His commandments, God will disclose Himself to us more and more. Our Saviour will come unto us, and make His abode with us, (see St.

\* Epistle, verse 7. † Morn. Less. (Job xxiv.)

‡ verse 24. || Even. Less. verse 12.

John, xiv. 22—25;) and we, being thus fitly framed and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit may hope to “grow unto an holy temple in the Lord, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”\* (See also Eph. v. 20—22.

\* Collect.

**All Saints' Day.**

(NOVEMBER 1.)

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|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Epistle</i> , Rev. vii. 2.   | <i>Morning Lessons</i> , Wisd. iii. to verse 10; Heb. xi. 33, and ch. xii. to verse 7. |
| <i>Gospel</i> , St. Matt. v. 1. | <i>Evening Lessons</i> , Wisd. v. to verse 17; Rev. xix. to verse 17.                  |

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WE, the members of Christ's Church militant on earth, unite on this day to celebrate the memories of our fellow members triumphant in heaven. Raising our thoughts to the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," we call to mind all those holy souls, who, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, are there waiting for their final consummation and bliss in the kingdom of glory. Not only, therefore, as on other saints' days, do we remember apostles, evangelists, or martyrs, but we commemorate every just spirit which has been made perfect in the faith of Christ from righteous Abel even unto this day. We praise God for the holiness which He has wrought in them, and we pray for grace to follow their good examples.

The collect teaches us to consider the members of Christ, whether triumphant in heaven,

or still militant on earth, as one great body, elected or called into His Church; they have all been joined or knit together in one communion and fellowship.”\* Joined to the same Head, they have been made partakers of the same privileges, redeemed by the same blood, strengthened by the same grace, and made heirs together of the same hopes of glory. Temporal death, therefore, can have no power to dissolve this holy fellowship. The members of Christ who have been removed from our sight by death, still remain true and living members of Christ’s mystical body, only they have reached the point which conceals them from our view. Their trials are over, and they are safe in the world of spirits, in the presence of their divine Head. There they hold communion with us, and we on earth with them. Like a great cloud of witnesses they encompass us about to encourage us in our heavenward path; we remember their virtues and strive to follow in their steps. This is the blessed company which was seen by the beloved disciple in the portion of his divine Revelation which is selected as this day’s epistle. From it, (as we here learn,) none are excluded who are found marked with the mark of Christ, and sealed with His blood. Those who have embraced and kept the faith, out of every tribe of Israel†—from every people and nation under heaven‡—all meet to sing one triumphant song of praise to God Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. There they stand before His throne with palms in their hands to mark their victory, their white robes denoting their inno-

\* Collect. † Verses 5—9; ‡ verse 9.

cency and purity from sin. The souls of the righteous, in this happy state, are safe in "the hands of God, and no torment can henceforth touch them."\* Even when the destroying angel of God is sent forth to execute His judgments, he will not be allowed to hurt those who have the seal of God sealed in their foreheads.†

But in the second lesson for this evening, St. John would still more vividly describe the happiness of these glorified spirits. As earthly figures are the only means by which we, who are in the flesh, can be made to look into the "unspeakable joys"‡ of heaven, their state of pure and holy rejoicing is here represented by the similitude of a marriage feast.|| The Church, as a bride, is going forth to meet her Lord. Her members are all adorned with that garment of innocence and holiness with which He has clothed them.§ They follow the "Word of God"¶ in His glory as they followed Him in His humiliation. All are glad and rejoice, and a voice of a great multitude, as of many waters, is heard shouting Hallelujah.\*\* Such is the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord. (Rev. xiv. 13.) Well, therefore, may Solomon describe the death of the righteous in the words read to us in this morning's lesson: for those who have such blessed hopes in store, death can be but a gain. It is only "in the sight of the unwise,"†† that such seem to die. Though their departure may be taken for mi-

\* 1st Morn. Less. verse 1. † Epistle, verse 3.

‡ Collect. || 2nd Even. Less. verses 7—10;

§ verses 8, 14; ¶ verse 14; \*\* verse 6;

†† verses 2, 3, 4.

sery, and their going from us to be utter destruction, yet we know that they are in peace, and that their hope is full of immortality. But if we would learn by what paths those holy souls entered into their rest, we must turn to the second lesson for this morning, and there we shall see that it was oftentimes through "much tribulation that they entered into the kingdom of God." As our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ entered not into glory, but first He endured the Cross, despising the shame,\* so neither could His servants; therefore do we read of the sufferings and afflictions of the saints of God in all ages, and we learn how they "resisted unto blood, striving against sin."† Supported and comforted by the blessed hope of immortality they shewed great boldness in the sight of them that afflicted them, so that their persecutors were troubled with terrible fear, being amazed at the strangeness of their salvation.‡ But they are numbered with the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. They live for evermore. Their reward is with the Most High. Therefore do they receive a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand.||

But it is not enough idly to contemplate the victory and happiness of our fellow members triumphant in heaven. We, who are still militant on earth, have yet to press forward towards the prize of our high calling; and if we would attain unto it as they attained, we must tread the path which they have trod. God, Who has a care for all His elect, and would

\* 2nd Morn. Less. (Heb. xii.) verse 2; † verse 4.

‡ 1st Even. Less. verses 1, 2; || verses 5, 15, 16.

bring "many sons unto glory," has provided for each one of us as He did for them, a crown in heaven. Though He may lead us to it by different ways, yet the same end is in the view of all, and the same rules may serve for all. Like them, therefore, we must continue "faithful unto death," (Rev. ii. 10,) serving God cheerfully through that particular measure of trial, temptation, or suffering which He sees fit to deal out to us. From their histories and examples, also, we may learn the fleeting nature of all things here below; and considering them but as "shadows that pass by," and our life as that which must soon "draw to an end,"\* look rather to the inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. Cleansed and purified by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, we must, like them, take up our cross, and fight manfully against "every sin which doth so easily beset us."† "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith,"‡ we must ascend with Him into the Holy Mount,"§ and there learn from His own lips, what were the graces which shone conspicuous in His saints, that we may "go and do likewise." Step by step, we must here learn how to add grace to grace, and virtue to virtue. To poverty of spirit, and mourning for sin,§ we must add meekness, gentleness, and peaceableness to men. Then, looking upwards to the things of God, we must "purify ourselves, even as He is pure," and so hunger and thirst after His

\* 1st Even. Less. verses 3—15.

† 2nd Morn. Less. (Heb. xii.) verse 1; ‡ verse 3.

§ Gospel; § verses 2, 3.



righteousness here,\* that we may be fit to be with Him where He is hereafter. With all the prophets† and righteous men who have gone before, we must be ready to rejoice when we are "counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name;" knowing that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.)

Such are the heavenly tempers which form the blessedness of the saints on earth, and are the beginning of that blessedness which will be perfected in heaven. May we then be enabled so to "follow God's blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living,"‡ that with them we may "be numbered in glory everlasting."

\* Gospel, verses 8, 10; † verse 12. ‡ Collect.

The End.



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